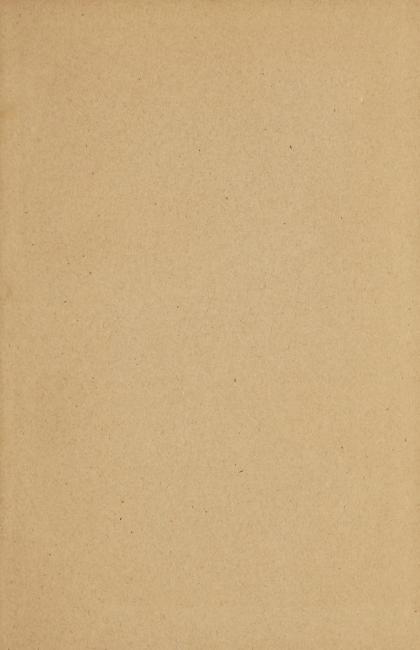
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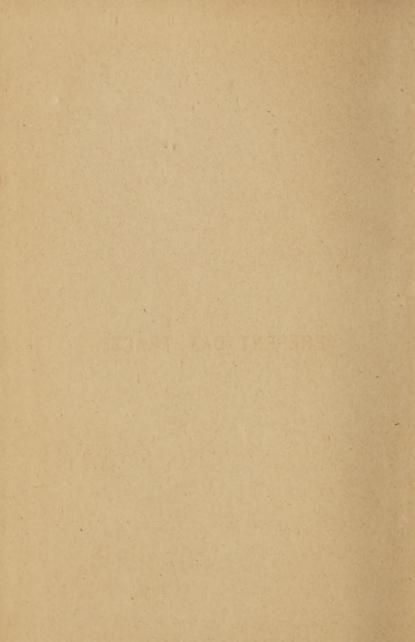


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VOLUME XII.

Comprising Nos. 67 to 72, which may also be had separately.



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PREFACE.

The Twelfth Volume of the Present Day Tracts will, it is hoped, fully maintain the character of its title, as most of the subjects treated therein will be recognized as having Present Day interest. The demands which the 'Higher Criticism' is now making are loud-sounding and confident. It asks us to loose our hold of a great deal that is most precious to us. Its latest requirement is, that we should assign to a date much later than David well-nigh all the Psalms attributed to him. This position has been most ably and calmly met by Dr. Green, in the Tract entitled The 'Psalms of David' and Modern Criticism, which is his first contribution to the Series. In it he not only ably marshals the evidence in favour of the Davidic authorship of the Earlier Psalms, but also briefly states and estimates the general position taken by Higher Critics.

The general subject of doubt as to the truths of Christianity is one that is always with us. From his unique knowledge of sceptical literature, Mr. Kaufmann is eminently fitted to perform the task which he takes in hand in the Tract entitled, Modern Scepticism Compared with Christian Faith. The various phases of scepticism as they develop themselves at the present time are brought under review, and are compared with Christian faith. This comparison exhibits the strong presumption there is in favour of the truth of Christianity, and the unsatisfactory position in which conscientious unbelievers must find themselves.

In considering the best method of presenting Christian truths to thinking men, the important proposition of Bacon that the principle of induction is as applicable to theology as it is to secular science, is much to the point. This proposition has been worked out by Dr. Angus in the Tract Theology an Inductive and a Progressive Science. Since Christian people believe that the doctrines of the faith are true, the Christian position can only gain by an attempt to set them forth by the same methods which are applied to other scientific studies. Dr. McCheyne Edgar's Tract upon Christ's Doctrine of Prayer, written in a clear and simple style, shows how this principle can be successfully applied to prayer. The Tract aptly supplements Dr. Angus' treatise, and both are peculiarly timely.

Two other Tracts complete the Volume. Testimonies of Great Men to the Bible and Christianity will be found a valuable summary of the opinions of various notable men on the Scriptures. All quotations have been most carefully verified, so that the extracts may in all cases be accepted as accurate. The other Tract is a helpful treatise on a subject that has occupied the attention of thinkers in all ages of the world's history, viz.: the use of suffering. The Tract is entitled, The Problem of Human Suffering in

the Light of Christianity.

With the exception of Dr. McCheyne Edgar and Mr. Kaufmann, all the contributors to this Volume appear in the Series for the first time.

May God abundantly bless this Volume, and cause it to fulfil in some measure its great purpose of endeavouring to exhibit something of the strength of that solid foundation upon which the Christian faith is built.

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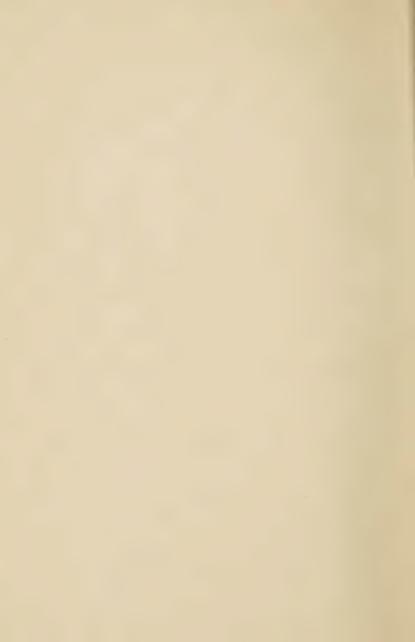
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TESTIMONIES OF GREAT MEN

TO THE

BIBLE AND CHRISTIANITY

BY

JOHN MURDOCH, LL.D.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER Row; 65, St. Paul's Churchyard; and 164, Piccadilly.

Argument of the Tract.

Religion is needed as a preparation for Eternity. How is the true Religion to be found? A Book Revelation is possible and necessary. A Revelation should be in writing. The possibility, probability, necessity of a Divine Revelation. Are educated men losing their faith in Christianity? The truth of Christianity not dependent upon any single theory of the Inspiration of the Bible. The Bible and Christianity deserving of consideration.

I. The Testimony of Writers of Rationalist and other Schools

—Rousseau, Lessing, Paine, Fichte, Richter, Goethe,
Theodore Parker, J. S. Mill, Strauss, Carlyle, Keshub
Chunder Sen, Renan, Seeley, Lecky, Huxley.

II. Testimony of other Masters in Literature—Selden, Locke, Addison, Johnson, Scott, Lord Macaulay, Ruskin, Channing.

III. The Testimony of Men of Science—Newton, Sir G. G. Stokes, Pascal, Brewster, Faraday, Clerk Maxwell, Kitchen Parker, Sir A. Clark, Sir Risdon Bennett, Asa Gray, Sir J. W. Dawson, Baron Kelvin, Balfour Stewart and Tait, Lord Rayleigh, Dr. Gladstone, Paget, eight hundred students of Natural and Physical Science.

IV. Testimony of Statesmen and Lawyers—Bacon, Hale, Napoleon Bonaparte, Bismarck, Gladstone, Hatherley, Cairns, Selborne, Halsbury.

The object in quoting the foregoing Testimonies. Conclusion.

TESTIMONIES OF GREAT MEN

TO THE

BIBLE AND CHRISTIANITY.

assagerer

UR stay in this world is short and Introuncertain. When we rise in the morning, we can never tell whether

the day may not be our last. Death often comes when least looked for. Surely the man is not wise who devotes all his thoughts to the present world, which he may so soon leave, while he neglects preparation for the future, which he may enter at any moment. We believe it is the Christian religion which alone can offer comfort in a dying hour. Nor is this

1 The fact that this essay was originally prepared for educated natives of India will explain some of the allusions.

The quotations here given are faithfully taken fron the passages in the writings of the authors as given in the footnotes, and can be verified by any reader for himself. Attention is drawn to the great variety of eminent men who thus add their testimony to the Bible and Christianity. The insertion of quotations from Rationalistic authors may cause some surprise, but they are specially added as showing, that notwithstanding their refusal to accept Evangelical Christianity, they could not withhold their admiration of the mora excellence of the character of Jesus Christ, and their appreciation of the Bible

all it proposes, for 'godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' Since, then, it professes to be a religion which is best adapted both for life and death, its claims deserve earnest consideration.

True religion how to be found.

It may be that some persons, in beginning to consider the Christian religion, will ask for proofs of the existence of God. The first question which may be put to them is, 'Do you wish that there should be a God or not?' Their belief is likely to be very much affected by their answer to this inquiry. Plato well said, 'Atheism is a disease of the soul before it becomes an error of the understanding.' It is the same with regard to religion. A man who wishes to believe that all religions are false is likely to have his opinion confirmed. A Hindu commentator justly remarks, 'They who desire to know the truth are competent for discussion.' This desire must exist. It must also be accompanied by earnest inquiry. Solomon says that wisdom will be found, 'if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures.'

There must also be a willingness to act up to our convictions of duty—to obey conscience. A man who lives in sin cannot expect to know the truth.

A BOOK REVELATION POSSIBLE AND NECESSARY.

It is not necessary that a Revelation should be completed at once. It may be given gradually as it is required.

If God exist, it must be possible for Him to make known His will to man. It would be an outrage on common sense to suppose that He could not do what man. His creature, is able to do.

The possibility of a divine revelation.

The late J. Stuart Mill makes the following Its probaconcession:

'On the hypothesis of a God, who made the world, and in making it had regard, however that regard may have been limited by other considerations, to the happiness of his sentient creatures, there is no antecedent improbability in the supposition that his concern for their good would continue, and that he might once or oftener give proof of it by communicating to them some knowledge of himself beyond what they were able to make out by their own unassisted faculties, and some knowledge or precepts useful for guiding them through the difficulties of life,' 1

Conder uses still stronger language:

'It is inconceivable that the Parent Mind, if loving men as His offspring and desiring their welfare, should withhold from them that knowledge which must be the noblest, the most desirable, and the most useful-the knowledge of Himself.' 2

A certain degree of light or revelation from God is given to every man that comes into

¹ Three Essays on Religion, p. 215.

² E. R. Conder's Basis of Faith, p. 295.

the world. The works of creation are sufficient to prove the *existence* of God. But some things are thus taught only imperfectly, as the *character* of God, and a *future state* of rewards and punishments, while other things cannot be known at all except they are revealed to us by God.

Advantage of a revelation in writing. Men who wish to frame a religion of their own sneer at 'book revelations.'

It is evident that a revelation which is made in writing must be much superior to one that is made only by word of mouth. To listen with reverence to the oral teaching of a prophet, and to deny authority to the same truths when written, would be absurd. 'The existence of a written word,' says Trench, 'is one necessary condition of any progress whatever in the world.' We remember the old Latin proverb, 'The written letter remains.' It is only through a written record that great spiritual truths can be satisfactorily transmitted unimpaired to future generations.

Its necessity.

Two arguments for the necessity of a Revelation may be mentioned:

I. The existing professed Revelations.—The Vedas of the Hindus, the Tripitika of the Buddhists, the Koran of the Mohammedans, and the Bible of the Christians, show that a

large number of civilised men in all ages have considered a Revelation necessary.

2. The Admissions of the deepest Thinkers.— The ancient Greeks and Romans had no sacred books. They numbered among them some of the men of acutest intellect that ever lived, who made earnest and persevering attempts to solve the 'enigmas of life.' What are their confessions? 'We will wait,' says Plato, 'for One, be it a God or a God-inspired man, to teach us our religious duties, and to take away the darkness from our eyes.' 'Oh, if one only might have a guide to truth!' sighs Seneca.

ARE EDUCATED MEN LOSING THEIR BELIEF IN CHRISTIANITY?

In all ages and in all countries there have been some who either have questioned the existence of God, or have scoffed at all religion. Christianity has often been threatened with extinction. About a century and a half ago, Voltaire boasted that it took twelve men to establish Christianity, but he would show that one man could overthrow it. Paine prophesied that within a hundred years not a Bible would be printed. But the number is now greater than ever.

Unbelievers may try to persuade people that Christianity is a 'dying superstition.' 'The wish is father to the thought.' People who read nothing else than infidel writings may believe them, but a fair decision demands that the other side should be heard. It will be found, on inquiry, that there is overwhelming evidence of a contrary description.

Instead of Christianity decaying in the world, the fact is that it was never more vigorous than at present. But this question needs to be considered in detail. We would only premise two things needful to be borne in mind throughout the discussion.

I. THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY IS NOT NECESSARILY DEPENDENT UPON ANY SINGLE THEORY OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

Hindus hold the Vedas to be eternal, every word of them proceeding from the mouth of Brahma. Muhammadans consider the Koran to be uncreated. Christians do not regard the Bible as a communication written in heaven, and let down in a complete form. 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.' The Bible is the history of the Divine education of the human race. The essentials of Christianity are to trust

in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour from the guilt and power of sin, and to seek through the help of the Holy Spirit to follow His example. These things are truth, whatever may be our theory of inspiration, and the man who truly believes them is a Christian.

The earliest summaries of Christian truth, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, do not mention the Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Bishop Butler, in his Analogy of Religion, says:

'The only question concerning the truth of Christianity is, whether it is a real revelation; not whether it is attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for; and concerning the authority of Scripture. whether it be what it claims to be, not whether it be a book of such sort and so promulgated as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a Divine revelation should. And therefore neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts, nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of the Scripture, unless the prophets, apostles, or our Lord, had promised that the book containing the Divine revelation should be secure from those things.'1

- 2. The Bible and Christianity are at least deserving of consideration.
- 'Jesus of Nazareth was, on the most

Christianity deserving of consideration. superficial no less than on the deepest view we take of His coming, the greatest name, the most extraordinary power, that ever crossed the stage of History.'

'Not to be interested in the life of Jesus Christ,' said the late Canon Liddon, 'is to be, I do not say irreligious, but unintelligent. It is to be insensible to the nature and claims of the most powerful force that has ever moulded the thought and swayed the destinies of civilised man.' ¹

Even apart from religion, the Bible deserves careful study. The mere *style* of the English Bible is remarkable. 'The English Bible is a masterpiece of English.' There are also so many allusions to the Bible scattered throughout English literature, that no one can thoroughly comprehend it without a good acquaintance with the Scriptures.

Having made these two preliminary remarks, we now proceed to answer the foregoing question as to whether educated men are losing their belief in Christianity; and opinions will first be quoted of writers of many various schools, who have at different times discussed the deepest problems of thought. Some of these have altogether rejected Christianity; others have denied those special doctrines of the Bible

Some Elements of Religion, Seventh edition, p. 212.

that we term 'evangelical'—the Holy Trinity, the Deity of Christ, and His Atonement, the fall of man, and his need of new birth through the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. But all are obliged to admit the moral excellence of the character of Jesus Christ and to express their approval of the Bible. The following quotations from some of these writers, here classed together for our purpose, are generally arranged in the order of time.

I.—TESTIMONY OF WRITERS OF RATIONALISTIC AND OTHER SCHOOLS.

J. J. ROUSSEAU. 1712—1770.

Rousseau.

On the Bible.

'Can a book, at once so sublime and so simple, be the work of men? Can the Person, whose history it relates, be himself but a mere man? Does it contain the language of an enthusiast or an ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manners! What affecting goodness in his instructions! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind! What ingenuity and what justness in his replies!
... Whence could Jesus have derived among his countrymen this elevated and pure morality, of which he alone has given the precept and example? From the bosom of the most furious bigotry, the most exalted

wisdom is heard, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues honours the vilest of the people. . . . Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a philosopher, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God. Should we suppose the Gospel was a story, invented to please? It is not in this manner that we forge tales, for the actions of Socrates, of which no person has the least doubt, are less satisfactorily attested than those of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty without removing it: it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it.'1

Lessing.

LESSING. 1729—1781.

'And so Christ was the first certain practical Teacher of the immortality of the soul. . . . Certain, through the prophecies which were fulfilled in him; certain, through the miracles which he achieved; certain, through his own revival after a death through which he had sealed his doctrine. . . . To enforce an inward purity of heart in reference to another life, was reserved for him alone. . . . For seventeen hundred years past they [the New Testament Scriptures] have exercised human reason more than all other books, and enlightened it more, were it only through the light which the human reason itself threw into them.' 2

Tom Paine. THOMAS PAINE, author of The Age of Reason. 1737—1809.

On Jesus Christ.

'Nothing that is here said can apply even with the most distant disrespect to the real character of Jesus

¹ Emilius and Sophia, vol. III., book IV., pp. 136-139. English edition, 1767.

² Education of the Human Race, English Translation, 1858, pp. 49, 51, 54.

Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind . . . it has not been exceeded by any.' 1

FICHTE. 1762—1814.

Fichte.

On the Bible.

'It nevertheless remains certain that we, with our whole age and with all our philosophical inquiries, are established on, and have proceeded from Christianity; that this Christianity has entered into our whole culture in the most varied forms; and that, on the whole, we might have been nothing of all that we are, had not this mighty principle gone before us in Time.'

'Even to the end of Time all wise and intelligent men must bow themselves reverently before this Jesus of Nazareth; and the more wise, intelligent and noble they themselves are, the more humbly will they recognize the exceeding nobleness of this great and glorious manifestation of the Divine Life.'2

JEAN PAUL RICHTER. 1763-1825.

Richter.

On Jesus Christ.

'The holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy, who has lifted up with his pierced hand empires off their hinges, has turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages.' ³

GOETHE. 1749—1832.

Goethe.

On the Bible.

'The Bible is so full of matter, that, more than any other book, it offers material for reflection and oppor-

1 Age of Reason, 1794, p. 5.

² Doctrine of Religion, lecture VI., p. 473. Dr. W. Smith's English edition of Fichte's Works, 1873.

³ Quoted in Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures (edition 1871), p. 149, from *Ueber den Gott in der Geschichte und im Leben*, Sämmtl. Werke xxxiii. 6; Stirm. p. 194. tunity for meditation on human affairs. . . . As for myself, I loved and valued it; for almost to it alone did I owe my moral culture, and the events, the doctrines, the symbols, the similes, had all impressed themselves deeply upon me, and had influenced me in one way or another.'1

'I esteem the Gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendour of a sublimity, proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, and of as divine a kind as was ever manifested upon earth' ²

'No criticism will be able to perplex the confidence which we have entertained of a writing whose contents have stirred up and given life to our vital energy by its own.' ⁸

'Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences progress in ever greater extent and depth, and the human mind widen itself as much as it desires—beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity, as it shines forth in the Gospels, it will not go.' ⁴

Theodore Parker.

THEODORE PARKER. 1810-1860.

On the Bible.

'View it in what light we may, the Bible is a very surprising phenomenon . . . This collection of books has taken such a hold on the world as no other. . . . In all the temples of Christendom is its voice lifted up, week by week. The sun never sets on its gleaming page. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar, and colours the talk of the street. . . . It enters men's closets, mingles in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. . . . The timid man, abov'

¹ Autobiography, book VII.

² Conversations with Eckermann and Soret, p. 567.

³ Autobiography, book XII.

^{&#}x27; Conversations with Eckermann, p. 568.

awaking from this dream of life, looks through the glass of Scripture, and his eye grows bright; he does not fear to stand alone, to tread the way unknown and distant, to take the death-angel by the hand, and bid farewell to wife, and babes, and home.' 1

On Jesus Christ.

'[Christ] unites in himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, thus more than realising the dream of prophets and sages; rises free from all prejudice of his age, nation, or sect . . . and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as Heaven, and true as God.' 'Try him as we try other teachers. They deliver their word, find a few waiting for the consolation. who accept the new tidings, follow the new method, and soon go beyond their teacher, though less mighty minds than he. . . . Though humble men, we see what Socrates and Luther never saw. But eighteen centuries have passed since the Sun of humanity rose so high in Jesus; what man, what sect, what church has mastered his thought, comprehended his method, and so fully applied it to life.'2 And again, 'Measure his religious doctrine by that of the time and place he lived in, or that of any time and place! Yes, by the doctrine of eternal truth. Consider what a work his words and deeds have wrought in the world. . . . Remember that the greatest minds have seen no farther, and added nothing to the doctrine of Religion; that the richest hearts have felt no deeper, and added nothing to the sentiment of Religion, have set no loftier aim, no truer method than his of PERFECT LOVE TO GOD AND MAN. . . . Measure him by the shadow he has cast into the world; no! by the light he has shed upon it. . . . Shall we be told, Such a man never lived—the whole story is a lie? Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived; that their story is a lie. But who did their

Discourse on Religion, pp. 317, 318, 319.

⁹ Discourse on Religion, pp. 294, 302, 303.

works, and thought their thought? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but a Jesus.'

J. S. Mill. JOHN STUART MILL. 1806—1873.

'Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of his followers. . . . But who among his disciples, or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; . . . still less the early Christian writers... But about the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight which . . . must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer, and martyr to that mission, who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life.'2

Strauss.

J. F. STRAUSS, author of the Leben Fesu. 1807—1874.

¹ Discourse on Religion, pp. 362, 363.

² Three Essays on Religion, pp. 253-55.

On Jesus Christ.

'Amongst the personages to whom mankind is indebted for the perfecting of its moral consciousness, Jesus occupies, at any rate, the highest place. He introduced into our ideal of goodness some features in which it was deficient before he appeared, or had continued undeveloped. . . . By the religious direction which he impressed upon morality, he gave it a higher consecration, and by incarnating goodness in his own person, he imparted to it a living warmth. . . . With reference to all that bears upon the love of God and of our neighbour, upon purity of heart, and upon the individual life . . . nothing can be added [to the moral intuition which Jesus Christ has left us].' 1

THOMAS CARLYLE. 1795—1881.

Carlyle.

On the Bible.

'A noble Book! [The Book of Job] All men's Book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem—man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody, and repose of reconcilement.' ²

'In the poorest cottage are books—is one Book, wherein for several thousands of years the spirit of man has found light and nourishment, and an interpreting response to whatever is Deepest in him; wherein still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the Mystery of Existence reflects itself, if not resolved, yet revealed, and prophetically emblemed; if not to the

¹ A New Life of Jesus, Fcap. ed. 1864, p. 625. See, also, English ed. (1865), vol. II., pp. 437, 438.

² On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History, Lecture II.

satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result.' 1

On Jesus Christ.

'Obscure tidings of the most important event ever transacted in this world, the Life and Death of the Divine Man in Judea, at once the symptom and cause of immeasurable change to all people in the world, had, in the course of centuries, reached into Arabia too.' ²

'If thou ask to what height man has carried it in this manner, look on our divinest Symbol: on Jesus of Nazareth, and his Life, and his Biography, and what followed therefrom. Higher has the human Thought not yet reached: this is Christianity and Christendom; a Symbol of quite perennial, infinite character; whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest.' ⁸

Keshub Chunder Sen, KESHUB CHUNDER SEN, the Indian Reformer. 1838—1882.

On Jesus Christ.

'He [Christ] was the son of a humble carpenter, and he laboured in connection with his ministry only three short years,—do not these simple facts conclusively prove, when viewed in reference to the vast amount of influence he has exercised on the world, that greatness dwelt in Jesus? Poor and illiterate, brought up in Nazareth—a village notorious for corruption—under demoralizing influences, his associates the lowest mechanics and fishermen, from whom he could receive not a single ray of enlightenment, he rose superior to all outward circumstances by the force of his innate greatness, and grew in wisdom, faith, and piety by meditation and prayer, and with the inspiration of the Divine spirit working within him. Though all the

¹ Critical Essay on Corn Law Rhymes.

² On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, lecture 11.

Sartor Resartus, book III., chapter iii.

external conditions of his life were against him, he rose above them with the strength of the Lord, and, with almost superhuman wisdom and energy, taught those sublime truths, and performed those moral wonders for which succeeding ages have paid him the tribute of gratitude and admiration. Verily, he was above ordinary humanity. Sent by Providence to reform and regenerate mankind he received from Providence wisdom and power for that great work.'

'The two fundamental doctrines of gospel ethics which stand out prominently above all others, and give it its peculiar grandeur and its pre-eminent excellence, are, in my opinion, the doctrines of forgiveness and self-sacrifice; and it is in these we perceive the moral greatness of Christ. These golden maxims how beautifully he preached, how nobly he lived. What moral serenity and sweetness pervade his life! What extraordinary tenderness and humility-what lamb-like meekness and simplicity! His heart was full of mercy and forgiving kindness; friends and foes shared his charity and love. And yet, on the other hand, how resolute, firm, and unyielding in his adherence to truth! He feared no mortal man, and braved even death itself for the sake of truth and God. Verily when we read his life, his meekness, like the soft moon, ravishes the heart, and bathes it in a flood of serene light; but when we come to the grand consummation of his career, his death on the cross, behold how he shines as the sun in its meridian splendour!'2

ERNEST RENAN.

Renan.

On Fesus Christ.

'Jesus is in every respect unique, and nothing can be compared with him.' 'This Christ of the Gospels is the

¹ Keshub Chunder Sen, Lectures and Tracts, pp. 9, 10. (Strahan.)

² Ibid., pp. 37, 38.

most beauteous incarnation of God, in the fairest of forms, viz., moral man—truly the son of God and the son of Man—God in man.' 'For long ages yet he is king. What do I say? His beauty is eternal, his reign shall have no end.... So long as one noble heart shall yearn after moral beauty, whilst one lofty soul shall be seized with joyful ecstacy before the realisation of the divine, Christ will have worshippers by reason of the part of his being which is truly eternal.' 1

'Be the unlooked-for phenomena of the future what they may, Jesus will not be surpassed. His worship will renew its youth without end, his story will draw forth ceaseless tears, his sufferings will melt the best hearts, all the ages will proclaim that among the sons of men, there has not been born one greater than Jesus.'2 'The day when he pronounced these words, he was truly the Son of God. . . . He founded the pure worship, belonging to no special period or country, which in truth all lofty souls shall practise to the end of time.'3 'Noble Initiator, repose now in thy glory! Thy work is finished, thy divinity is established. . . . A thousand times more living, a thousand times more loved since thy death, than during the days of thy course here below, thou shalt become the corner stone of humanity, inasmuch as to tear thy name from this world would be to shake it to its very foundations. No more shall men distinguish between thee and God.' 4

Seeley.

PROFESSOR SEELEY, author of Ecce Homo and Natural Religion:

'It was neither for his miracles, nor for the beauty of his doctrine that Christ was worshipped. Nor was it for his winning personal character, nor for the

¹ Etud. d'Hist. Rel., 175, 213, 214.

² Life of Fesus, chap. xxviii. ³ Ibid., c

Life of Jesus, chap. xxv.

³ Ibid., chap. xiv.

persecutions he endured, nor for his martyrdom. It was for the inimitable unity which all these things made when taken together. In other words it was for this, that he, whose power and greatness as shown in his miracles were overwhelming, denied himself the use of his power, treated it as a slight thing, walked among men as though he were one of them, relieved them in distress, taught them to love each other, bore with undisturbed patience a perpetual hailstorm of calumny; and when his enemies grew fiercer, continued still to endure their attacks in silence, until, petrified and bewildered with astonishment, men saw him arrested and put to death with torture, refusing stedfastly to use in his own behalf the power he conceived he held for the benefit of others. It was the combination of greatness and self-sacrifice which won their hearts, the mighty powers held under a mighty control, the unspeakable condescension, the Cross of Christ,' 1

W. E. H. LECKY, author of the History of Lecky. the Eighteenth Century, etc.

In his *History of European Morals*, he bears the following testimony to the Effects of Christianity:—

'It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions, has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence, that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind

¹ Ecce Homo, pp. 45, 46.

than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists.' ¹

Huxley.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

Regarding the Bible simply as a School Book, he says:

'Consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history: that it has become the national epic of Britain, and is as familiar to noble and simple, from John O'Groat's House to Land's End, as Dante and Tasso once were to the Italians: that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary form: and, finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations, and of a great past, stretching back to the furthest limits of the oldest nations in the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanised and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the intervals between two eternities; and earns the blessings or the curses of all time, according to its effort to do good and hate evil, even as they also are earning their payment for their work?'2

II.—TESTIMONIES OF OTHER MASTERS IN LITERATURE.

Selden.

JOHN SELDEN. 1584—1654.

'Our learned Selden, before he dyed, sent for the Most Reverend Archbishop Usher and the Rev. Dr.

¹ History of European Morals, vol. II., p. 9, First edition.

² Critiques and Addresses (1873), article The School Boards, first published in Contemporary Review, 1870.

Langbaine, and discoursed to them to this purpose: That he had survey'd most part of the Learning that was among the Sons of Men; that he had his study full of Books and Papers of most subjects in the world: yet at that time he could not recollect any passage out of infinite Books and Manuscripts he was master of, wherein he could Rest his soul, save out of the Holy Scriptures.' 1

JOHN LOCKE. 1632-1704.

Locke.

This profound thinker was asked which was the shortest and surest way for a person to attain a true knowledge of the Christian religion. His reply was:

'Let him study the Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.' ²

JOSEPH ADDISON. 1672-1719.

Addison.

Addison left an unfinished work on *The Evidences of Christianity*. His step-son was careless about religion. Shortly before his death, Addison called to him and said, 'See how a Christian can die!' A true Christian can die without fear.

¹ Historical Applications. By A Person of Honour [Lord Berkeley], 1670, p. 12.

² Locke's Works, vol. x. (ed. 1823), p. 306.

³ Dr. Johnson's Life of Addison ("British Poets," vol. XXVI. p. 35.)

S. Johnson. SAMUEL JOHNSON. 1709-1784.

When near the end of life, this great moralist exhorted Mr. Hoole and others to read the Bible.¹ He himself made a practice of regularly reading the Bible.

'I hope to read the whole Bible once a year, as long as I live. . . . I devoted this week to the perusal of the Bible, and have done little secular business.' ²

In Boswell's Life we read:

'For some time before his death, all his fears were calmed and absorbed by the prevalence of his faith, and his trust in the merits and *propitiation* of Jesus Christ. He talked often to me about the necessity of faith in the *sacrifice* of Jesus, as necessary beyond all good works whatsoever for the salvation of mankind.' ³

Scott

SIR WALTER SCOTT. 1771-1832.

A few days before his death, this distinguished writer expressed a wish that his son-in-law would read to him. 'From what book shall I read?' It was said. 'Need you ask?' Sir Walter replied: 'There is but one.' It was at once understood that he meant the Bible.

¹ See Appendix to Boswell's work, p. 842. Narrative by J. Hoole of the Doctor's last days.

² Prayers and Meditations, composed by Samuel Johnson, D.D. By George Strahan (1785), p. 106.

³ Boswell's Life of Johnson (Routledge, 1867), p. 506.

⁴ Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, vol. II., p. 364.

LORD MACAULAY. 1800—1859.

Macaulay.

In a speech in Parliament, after referring to the old system of British Government in India, which allowed infanticide and suttee to continue unchecked, he added:

'We lowered ourselves in the eyes of those whom we meant to flatter. We led them to believe that we attached no importance to the difference between Christianity and heathenism. Yet how vast that difference is! I altogether abstain from alluding to topics which belong to divines. I speak merely as a politician, anxious for the morality and the temporal well-being of society. And, so speaking, I say that to countenance Brahminical idolatry, and to discountenance that religion which has done so much to promote justice and mercy, and freedom, and arts, and sciences, and good government, and domestic happiness, which has struck off the chains of the slave, which has mitigated the horrors of war, which has raised women from servants and playthings into companions and friends, is to commit high treason against humanity and civilisation.' 1

John Ruskin:

Ruskin.

'My mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; ... and to that discipline—patient, accurate and resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature.' 2

'I have just opened my oldest (in use) Bible.... My mother's list of chapters, with which, thus learned, she established my soul in life, has just fallen out of it.... And truly ... this maternal installation of my mind in

¹ Speech, The Gates of Somnauth. (See Speeches).

Ruskin's Praterita, chap. i., p. 2.

that property of chapters, I count, very confidently, the most precious, and, on the whole, the one essential part of all my education.' 1

Channing.

Dr. W. E. CHANNING, the eloquent American Unitarian. 1780—1862.

On Jesus Christ.

'I know not what can be added to heighten the wonder, reverence, and love which are due to Jesus. When I consider him, not only as possessed with the consciousness of an unexampled and unbounded majesty, but as recognising a kindred nature in human beings, and living and dying to raise them to a participation of his Divine glories; and when I see him, under these views, allying himself to men by the tenderest ties, embracing them with a spirit of humanity which no insult, injury, or pain could for a moment repel or overpower, I am filled with wonder as well as reverence and love. I feel that this character is not of human invention, that it was not assumed through fraud, or struck out by enthusiasm; for it is infinitely above their reach.' 2

III.—TESTIMONIES OF MEN OF SCIENCE.

Sir I. Newton. Many educated persons think that modern science disproves Christianity. But of SIR ISAAC NEWTON (1642–1727), his biographer says:

'.. that the greatest philosopher of which any age can boast was a sincere and humble believer in the leading doctrines of our religion and lived conformably to its precepts, has been justly regarded as a proud triumph of the Christian faith . . . He had been a searcher of

¹ Ruskin's Præterita, chap. ii., pp. 56-58.

² Discourse on Character of Christ (see Works).

the Scriptures from his youth, and he found it no abrupt transition to pass from the study of the material universe to an investigation of the profoundest truths and the most obscure predictions of Holy Writ... When Dr. Halley (the Astronomer Royal) ventured to say anything disrespectful to religion, he invariably checked him, with the remark, "I have studied these things,—you have not."'1

Against this testimony, it is objected that he was unacquainted with Darwinism. Professor Huxley, however, admits in his Glasgow lecture that 'evolution' leaves the argument from design practically where it was. It is thirty years since Darwin made known his opinions, but Christianity is held as firmly as ever by some of the most eminent scientific men of the present time.

Sir George Stokes, like his illustrious predecessor, Sir Isaac Newton, is (1892) Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge; he was one of the members of Parliament for the University; and when he wrote the paper quoted below, he was President of the Royal Society.

He wrote the following short paper in 1890, specially for educated Hindus, at the request of the compiler of this tract, to expose a prevailing misconception among them:

'My attention has been called to a statement made in some of the Indian papers to the effect that Christianity has lost its hold on the Western nations; that it is now believed in chiefly by the ignorant and unSir G. G.

¹ Life of Sir Isaac Newton, by Sir David Brewster, vol. ii., pp. 314, 408.

educated; and that scientific men almost universally reject it.

'My own position and my tastes have naturally brought me into contact with a large number of scientific men, with many of whom I am intimately acquainted; and I can say from my own knowledge that the above statement is very far indeed from being true. A certain amount of reticence on such subjects is usual, and I am disposed to think desirable, in general conversation, where people are not intimately acquainted with one another, unless in cases where they have met for some expressly religious object. But one can hardly be well acquainted with other people without getting to know something of their religious convictions. I feel reluctant to speak of the living, able though I am to do so, but I know that men like Faraday, Clerk Maxwell, Kitchen Parker, and others, were sincere believers in the Christian faith. The last held the modern view of evolution in what some might think an extreme form, and regarded it as God's mode of working; but from expressions which have fallen from him in conversation and correspondence I feel sure that he did not reject the supernatural. I am aware that there are some scientific men who admire Christian morality, but reject the supernatural element in the Christian religion. To me the supernatural element appears to be essential, and I know of many scientific men who think the same.

Our religion deals with many matters of which at present we have only a very imperfect comprehension. The desire of knowledge which is natural to the human mind, and the vast importance of the subject, often lead believers in the Christian faith to attempt to frame systems of belief which really go beyond what is fairly to be established by right reason combined with what as Christians we believe to have been distinctly revealed; and sometimes such men go so far as to

ostracise those who do not agree with these systems, humanly devised to some extent though they be, and, in so far as they are such, liable to human error.

'An outsider, whose own religion is altogether different from the Christian, is not in a position to form a good judgment what portions of what he may hear from a Christian teacher are essential parts of the Christian faith, and what are of the nature of speculations which possibly may be erroneous. It may be, that he lays hold of some human error, which he mistakenly supposes to be a necessary part of the Christian faith, and in rejecting it thinks that he has disproved the Christian faith. The Christian religion should be judged of as a whole, by its broad outlines rather than by some details respecting which Christians are not all agreed It involves an admission of the supernatural, including some supernatural events which are of such a nature as to admit of historical attestation. But the historical evidence, weighty as it is as regards the most important facts, is not to be separated from the religious system of which those facts form a part, and which is of such a nature that it speaks to the heart and conscience, and renders it credible that there might have been such a deviation from the ordinary course of nature as must have occurred if those asserted facts really took place.'

In 1883, Sir George Stokes read a Paper before the Victoria Institute, 'On the Absence of Real Opposition between Science and Revelation.' In 1888, from the chair at the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society, he stated that mathematical demonstration cannot be expected in religion any more than in the affairs of common life. Thus we believe that there was a king called

Alexander the Great, although we cannot prove mathematically that such a person ever existed. He also explained that many of the attacks upon Christianity arise from ignorance of its real doctrines. He says:

'On one occasion I was at a meeting of this Society in a hall where the audience was mainly composed of professed atheists. They attacked what they supposed to be Christian doctrines, but I could not help being forcibly struck by this—what an utter caricature of Christian truth it is that these men have been attacking! I do not say that they were dishonest; I have no reason to suppose they were. But they were ignorant of what they professed to attack, and they were particularly self-confident.

'Now I believe that some men of this kind are in the habit of giving open-air lectures in various parts of London, where they attract a crowd around them. The crowd that come to hear them are, I suppose, for the most part persons of no great education—persons very likely who have not paid any particular attention to Christianity. They hear these men attacking certain Christian doctrines (as they believe them to be), and the audience, not knowing much about the subject themselves, take it for granted that what is attacked is really Christianity, and that the arguments which are adduced against some caricature of Christianity really go against Christianity itself.' 1

He further stated that there may be errors regarding science among persons who think it opposed to Christianity:

'. . . They frequently lump together everything that all scientific men have said; they take it as one whole,

¹ Report, 1888, p. 33.

and as a thing thoroughly well established by science. And if they find anything which they think is opposed to religion—which possibly may be opposed to religion, because in a thing like this, involving a mixture of truth and error, there may be something antagonistic to religion, men of this kind, being unable to appreciate the different degrees of evidence there are for different assertions or hypotheses or mere conjectures, may sometimes be led into difficulty by taking as a well-established proposition resulting from the study of science, what is, after all, the merest conjecture; and a conjecture is, of course, liable to be erroneous, and, being erroneous, to be opposed to that which is true.'1

Pascal, who was not only a Christian philo-Pascal. sopher, but also a great Mathematician. 1632—1662.

'Let one consider the marvels of the Holy Scripture, which are endless; the grandeur and sublimity, beyond everything human, of the matters which they contain, and the admirable simplicity of the style, in which is nothing affected, nothing studied, and which bears upon the face of it the irresistible stamp of truth.' ²

'Jesus Christ speaks the grandest things so simply that it seems as if He had not thought of them, but nevertheless so precisely and perspicuously that one sees clearly what His reflection upon them has been. This clearness, united with this artlessness, is admirable.' ⁸

'Men simple and without strength, like the apostles and early Christians, resisted all the powers of the world, subdued kings, learned men and philosophers, and destroyed the idolatry so firmly established. And

¹ Report, 1888, pp. 33, 34.

² Thoughts on Religion, chap. viii., p. 72.

³ Ibid., chap. xiv., p. 117.

the whole was accomplished by the mere force of that word which Christ had preached.'1

Brewster. SIR DAVID BREWSTER. 1781—1868.

The following extracts are from an account of his last days:

'Did the Christian mysteries give him no trouble? None, why should they? We are surrounded by mysteries. . . . He thanked God the way of salvation was so simple, no laboured argument, no hard attainment was required. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ was to live; he trusted in Him, and enjoyed His peace.' 2

His last words were these:

'Life has been very bright to me, and now there is the brightness beyond.' 'I shall see Jesus, who created all things; Jesus who made the worlds; I shall see Him as He is.' 'Yes; I have had the Light for many years, and oh, how bright it is! I feel so SAFE, SO SATISFIED.' 3

Faraday. MICHAEL FARADAY. 1791—1867.

Faraday was an earnest Christian all his life, and acted as elder in the Church which he attended regularly. His biographer, Dr. Bence Jones, after mentioning his noble qualities, thus concludes his memoirs:—

¹ Thoughts on Religion, chap. xv., p. 123.

² The Home Life of Sir David Brewster, by his daughter, Mrs. Gordon, pp. 405, 406, 407, 410.

'Some will consider that his strong religious feeling was the prime cause of these great qualities: and there is no doubt that one of his natural qualities was greatly strengthened by his religion. It produced what may well be called his marvellous humility.

'That one who had been a newspaper boy should receive, unsought, almost every honour which every republic of science throughout the world could give; that he should for many years be consulted constantly by the different departments of the Government, and other authorities, on questions regarding the good of others; that he should be sought after by the princes of his own and of other countries; and that he should be the admiration of every scientific or unscientific person who knew anything of him, was enough to have made him proud; but his religion was a living root of fresh humility, and from first to last it may be seen growing with his fame and reaching its height with his glory, and making him to the end of his life certainly the humblest, whilst he was also the most energetic, the truest, and the kindest of experimental philosophers.

'To complete this picture, one word more must be said of his religion. His standard of duty was supernatural. It was not founded upon any intuitive ideas of right and wrong; nor was it fashioned upon any outward expediences of time and place; but it was formed entirely on what he held to be the revelation of the will of God in the written Word, and throughout all his life his faith led him to act up to the very letter of it.'1

Professor James Clerk Maxwell, the J. C. Maxdistinguished exponent of electrical science. well. 1831—1879.

¹ Vol. II., pp. 485, 486.

- 'I have looked into most philosophical systems, and I have seen that none will work without a God.' ¹
- 'I have read up many queer religions: there is no thing like the old thing after all.' 2
- 'I think men of science as well as other men need to learn from Christ, and I think Christians whose minds are scientific are bound to study science that their view of the glory of God may be as extensive as their being is capable of.'⁸

Kitchen Parker. W. KITCHEN PARKER, late Hunterian Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons.⁴ 1823—1890.

'When, as a tall farmer's son, I left home to study science, I said, "I am going to serve God," and I gave myself to God in prayer. The lady where I went said, "William, read your Bible once every day." William did; but he does not read the Bible only once a day. now. After fifty years I am not likely to lose sight of Christ. He is my life. . . . My being a Darwinian or Evolutionist has not touched that. "Christ in me the hope of glory." What a little thing is science to put against that! It is merely the ends, shreds, patches, and rays of knowledge. . . . The more childlike we are in science, as well as in religion, the better it will be. Science, in geology and biology, does not touch the Scriptures in the least. It does not affect the belief of any godly man who studies it. Do not think that because Evolution has been taken advantage of to endeavour to get rid of Christianity, therefore Evolution is, or means, any harm, or that Darwin's theory of the gradual origin of species means any harm. It means nothing of the sort.'5

¹ Life, by Lewis Campbell and William Garnett, p. 426.

p. 426. ³ p. 404. ⁴ See p. 28.

b Report of the Christian Evidence Society, 1889, p. 45.

SIR ANDREW CLARK, President of the Royal Sir A. Clark. College of Physicians. Presiding in 1890 at the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society, he gave his reasons for accepting Christianity. The following were his concluding remarks:

'No one with any wide experience, such as my own, can doubt how vast, how terrible, how far reaching, are the sins and sufferings of men to-day, as they have been in all days; no one can doubt for a moment, whatever be his creed, that human remedies have been tried and have all failed. No one can doubt who has had adequate opportunities of observation, adequate powers of reflection, that there is one remedy, and one alone. for all this spiritual disease, and that that remedy is to be found in the person and work of Jesus Christ.'1

At the same meeting the late SIR RISDON Sir Risdon BENNETT (1809-1891), President of the Royal College of Physicians (1876 to 1881), spoke as follows of scientific men who have been 'firm and devout believers in Christianity':

'They were men gifted with the highest mental endowments, which, through life, they devoted to the investigation of truth. They were men ever seeking for, and weighing evidence in support of the doctrines they promulgated, who, by habitual and careful mental training, had become eminently fitted for judging of evidence. They were men who saw and felt that there were departments of knowledge distinct from the material universe, and for which evidence was required outside the domain in which they had been working.

¹ Report of the Christian Evidence Society, 1890, p. 33.

They felt and admitted the supreme importance of such subjects, not only to their own spiritual nature, of which they were conscious, but also to the welfare of all mankind. They sought for, found, and weighed such evidence in support of revealed religion as satisfied their trained intellects.' 1

And again, in the same address:

'It has been truly said that "the real evidence of Christianity is its power." And how can we look round the world and fail to see proof of this power wherever the Gospel is known, among all races of mankind, all classes of society, all ranks of intellect? What is there comparable to Christianity in promoting the happiness and welfare of mankind? The full influence of this power, even as regards the present life, we have indeed yet to see; and we can but faintly appreciate the inestimable light it has shed on the life to come, the full glory of which has yet to be revealed.'²

Asa Gray.

Professor Asa Gray, a noted American Botanist.

'But, however we may differ in regard to the earlier stages of religious development, we shall agree in this, that revelation culminated, and for us most essentially consists, in the advent of a Divine Person, who, being made man, manifested the Divine Nature in union with the human; and that this manifestation constitutes Christianity.' ⁸

Sir J. W. Dawson. SIR J. W. DAWSON, a distinguished Geologist, Principal of McGill College, Montreal, and one of the Presidents of the British Association.

Report of the Christian Evidence Society, 1890, p. 41.

² Ibid, p. 42.

³ Natural Science and Religion (New York, 1880), p. 108.

'The Bible contains within itself all that under God is required to account for and dispose of all forms of infidelity, and to turn to the best and highest uses all that man can learn of nature,' 1

SIR WILLIAM THOMSON (now Baron Kelvin Sir W. Thomson. of Largs), one of the Presidents of the British Association, and President of the Royal Society.

In 1889, he was chairman at the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society, when he said .

'My primary reason for accepting the invitation to preside was that I wished to show sympathy with this great Society, and with the Committee in their strenuous efforts for good. I did also think that something was owing from Science. I have long felt that there was a general impression in the non-scientific world that the scientific world believes science has discovered ways of explaining all the facts of nature without adopting any definite belief in a Creator. I have never doubted that that impression was utterly groundless.'2

Stewart and

Professors Balfour Stewart and Tait.

Dr. Balfour Stewart is the author of a wellknown work on Physics. Dr. Tait is professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh. They published some years ago, a work entitled The Unseen Universe. Its main design is thus explained in the Preface:

'Our object in the present work is to endeavour to show that the presumed incompatibility of Science and Religion does not exist. This, indeed, ought to be self-

¹ Nature and the Bible (New York, 1875), p. 221.

² Report of the Christian Evidence Society, 1889, p. 46.

evident to all who believe that the Creator of the Universe is Himself the Author of Revelation.' 1

Lord Rayleigh. LORD RAYLEIGH, President of the British Association (1884), and formerly Professor of Experimental Physics in the University of Cambridge.

He thus shows that science does not necessarily tend to materialism, and that scientific men have no greater claim than others as religious teachers:

'Many excellent people are afraid of science as tending towards materialism. That such apprehension should exist is not surprising; for, unfortunately, there are writers speaking in the name of science who have set themselves to foster it. It is true that among scientific men, as in other classes, crude views are to be met with as to the deeper things of Nature: but that the life-long beliefs of Newton, of Faraday, and of Maxwell are inconsistent with the scientific habit of mind is surely a proposition which I need not pause to refute. It would be easy, however, to lay too much stress upon the opinions of even such distinguished workers as these. Men who devote their lives to investigation, cultivate a love of truth for its own sake, and endeavour to clear up, and not, as is too often the object in business or politics, to obscure a difficult question. So far the opinion of a scientific worker may have a special value; but I do not think he has a claim superior to that of other educated men, to assume the attitude of a prophet. In his heart he knows that underneath the theories that he constructs there lie contradictions which he cannot reconcile. The higher

¹ The Unseen Universe, preface.

mysteries of being, if penetrable at all by human intellect, require other weapons than those of calculation and experiment.'1

DR. GLADSTONE, F.R.S., a well known Dr. Gladscientific man of our own day, referring to Sir George Stokes being in the chair at the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society, said:

'. . . We can, to a certain extent, answer the objection which is often made, that there is an antagonism between science and Christianity. That is one of the stock arguments of a certain class. . . . But, in fact, the leading scientific men are on the side of Christ. It is not only true of the science of the present day, but it is also true of the science of the past; and it is the case on the Continent as well as in England. We find, of course, that the advance of knowledge is bringing with it certain difficulties. There is a certain tendency from materialistic study to materialistic views; but how true is the dictum, "A little knowledge leads to atheism, but a greater amount of knowledge brings a man back again to God." , 2

SIR JAMES PAGET, the noted Surgeon, 'On Paget the Religious Belief of Scientific Men':

'The proportion of scientific men who profess the Christian faith is, I believe, about the same as that of literary men, or of lawyers, or merchants, or any other group of men in the same social position, or of equal general culture. You will find among scientific men very few who attack either theology or religion.

¹ Presidential Address, British Association, 1884. See Report, pp. 22, 23.

Report of the Christian Evidence Society, 1888, pp. 43, 44.

attacks imputed to them are made for the most part by those who, with a very scanty knowledge of science use not its *facts*, but its most distant *inferences*, as they do whatever else they can get from any source, for the overthrow of religious beliefs.'¹

Eight hundred students of the Physical sciences.

Declaration of Eight Hundred Students of the Physical Sciences.

The following declaration was signed in 1864 by eight hundred students of the physical sciences:

'We, the undersigned students of the natural sciences, desire to express our sincere regret that the researches into scientific truth are perverted by some in our own time into occasion for casting doubt upon the truth and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures.

'We conceive that it is impossible for the Word of God, as written in the book of nature, and God's Word, written in Holy Scripture, to contradict one another, however much they may appear to differ. We are not forgetful that physical science is not complete, but is only in a condition of progress, and that at present our finite reason enables us only to see as through a glass darkly; and we confidently believe that a time will come when the two records will be seen to agree in every particular.'2

IV.—TESTIMONY OF STATESMEN AND LAWYERS.

STATESMEN, as a rule, are the ablest men of a country, accustomed to take broad views of

^{&#}x27; Theology and Science, p. 3.

² Times, Sept. 20, 1864. The original document is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

things; the great work of lawyers is to weigh evidence. The opinions of both on the subject of religion deserve attentive consideration.

Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England, Bacon. 'the Prince of Philosophers.' 1561—1626.

'Thy creatures have been my books, but Thy Scriptures much more: I have sought Thee in the courts, fields, and groves, but I have found Thee in Thy Temples.'

SIR MATTHEW HALE, Lord Chief Justice of Sir M. England. 1609—1676.

On the Bible.

'It is a book full of light and wisdom, will make you wise to eternal life, and furnish you with directions and principles to guide and order your life safely and prudently.' 'There is no book like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use.' 2

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON BONAPARTE. 1769 Napoleon Bonaparte. —1821.

'The Bible contains a complete series of facts, and of historical men to explain time and eternity, such as no other religion has to offer. Everything in it is grand and worthy of God. Book unique! who but God could produce that idea of perfection equally exclusive and original?

'The Bible is more than a Book; it is a living being, with an action, a power which invades everything that opposes its extension. Behold it is upon this table,

¹ Works, Ed. James Spedding (1874), vol. XIV., p. 230.

 $^{^{8}}$ Works, Moral and Religious, of Sir M. Hale (1805), vol. pp. 207, 238.

this Book surpassing all others; I never omit to read it, and every day with new pleasure.

'Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison: He is truly a Being by Himself. His ideas and His sentiments, the truth which He announces, His manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organisation or by the nature of

'Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love; and, at this hour, millions of men would die for Him.

'Truth should embrace the universe. Such is Christianity—the only religion which destroys sectional prejudices; the only one which proclaims the unity and the absolute brotherhood of the whole human family; the only one which is purely spiritual; in fine, the only one which assigns to all, without distinction, for a true country, the bosom of the Creator, God.' ¹

Bismarek.

things.

PRINCE BISMARCK.

'If I were not a Christian, I would not continue to serve the King another hour...Why should I incessantly worry myself, and labour in the world, exposing myself to embarrassments, annoyances, and evil treatment, if I

¹ See The First Napoleon's Testimony to Jesus Christ, published by Religious Tract Society, Every Week Series, 952. The late Canon Liddon, in his Bampton Lectures, p. 148, adds the following references: Luthardt, Apologetische Vorträge, pp. 234, 293; Bersier, Sermon, p. 334; Chauvelot, Divinité du Christ, pp. 11, 13 (Paris, 1863); M. Auguste Nicolas, Etudes Philosophiques sur le Christianisme (Bruxelles, 1849, tom II., p. 352, 356); Chevalier de Beauterne, Sentiment de Napoléon sur le Christianisme, édit. par M. Bathild Bouniol (Paris, 1864), pp. 87-118.

did not feel bound to do my duty on behalf of God?... Were I not a staunch Christian, did I not stand upon the miraculous basis of religion, you would never have possessed a Federal Chancellor in my person.' 1

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

Gladstone

'Christianity, even in its sadly imperfect development, is, as matter of fact, at the head of the world. As the first existing power, it rules the world; and, of all the more or less noisy pretenders who, as if it were an Ottoman despotism, are prematurely disputing for the succession, there is not one which has given evidence either of being capable, or of being accepted, for the place it has so long held.' ²

Mr. Gladstone also observes:

'For the last fifteen hundred years Christianity has always marched in the van of all human improvement and civilisation, and it has harnessed to its car all that is great and glorious in humanity.' ⁸

With regard to the attacks upon Christianity, Mr. Gladstone says:

'A Christianity without Christ is no Christianity; and a Christ not divine is one other than the Christ on whom the souls of Christians have habitually fed. . . .

'Our bedimmed eye could not perceive His (God's) purity, and our puny reach could not find touch of His vastness. By the scheme of Redemption this sense of distance was removed. The divine perfections were reflected through the medium of a perfect humanity, and were thus made near, familiar, and liable to love. The great all-pervading law of human sympathy became directly available for religion, and in linking us to the

¹ See Prince Bismarck, by Charles Lowe, vol. II., p. 551.

² Rectorial Address in Glasgow, p. 26.

³ Acknowledged in a letter to Editor of Present Day Tracts

Divine Humanity, linked us, by the same act, to God. And this, not for rare and exceptional souls alone, but for the common order of mankind. The direct contact, the interior personal communion of the individual with God was re-established: for human faculties, in their normal action, could now appreciate, and approach to, what had previously been inappreciable and unapproachable. Surely the system I have thus rudely exhibited was ideally a great philosophy as well as practically an immeasurable boon. To strike out the redemptive clauses from the scheme is to erase the very feature by which it essentially differed from all other schemes; and to substitute a didactic exhibition of superior morality, with the rays of an example in the preterit tense, set by a dead man in Judæa, for that scheme of living forces, by which the powers of a living Saviour's humanity are daily and hourly given to man, under a charter which expires only with the world itself.

'While the moral government of the world is founded on the free agency of man, there are, in multitudes of cases, environing circumstances independent of his will which seem to deprive that agency, called free, of any operative power adequate to contend against them. In this bewildered state of things, in this enigma of the world ... there has come upon the world the figure of a Redeemer, human and divine. Let it be granted that the Incarnation is a marvel wholly beyond our reach, and that the miracle of the Resurrection to-day gives serious trouble to fastidious intellects. But the difficulties of a baffled understanding, lying everywhere around us in daily experience, are to be expected from its limitations; not so the shocks encountered by the moral sense. Even if the Christian scheme slightly lengthened the immeasurable catalogue of the first, this is dust in the balance compared with the relief it furnishes to the second; in supplying the most powerful remedial agency ever known, in teaching how pain may be made a helper, and evil transmuted into good; and in opening clearly the vision of another world, in which we are taught to look for yet larger counsels of the Almighty wisdom.'1

FIVE LORD CHANCELLORS OF ENGLAND.

The highest position which a lawyer can attain in England is that of Lord High Chancellor. He ranks next to the Archbishop of Canterbury after Princes of the blood royal. The late Bishop of Carlisle, Dr. Harvey Goodwin, himself a distinguished student of science, said: 'I have had the privilege of being a member of the House of Lords while five distinguished lawyers sat upon the woolsack. The first was Lord Hatherley, then there was Lord Cairns, then Lord Selborne, then Lord Herschell, and then the present Lord Chancellor (Lord Halsbury).'

LORD HATHERLEY was for 35 years a Sunday- Hatherley. school teacher. He wrote a book on the Continuity of Scripture. The following is an extract from his memoir:

'August, 1875. To-day we [himself and Lady Hatherley] have just finished our reading of the Bible through together for the 44th time. In my old age I begin so immensely to prefer the Bible to all good books of what kind soever. It is always new; at least one always finds something new that escaped one's observation at the last reading; and how wonderfully independent it is of a various reading here, or a mistaken trans-

¹ Nineteenth Century, May, 1888, pp. 780, 785, 786, 787.

lation there, being the whole that it is, a living whole, that is and will be 'Spirit and Life' till time shall be no more. 'Thy word, O Lord, is settled for ever in heaven'.

Cairns.

EARL CAIRNS was twice Lord Chancellor. His eldest daughter gives his last words, spoken to his family, as follows:

'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

'Our one object should be to testify our love to Him.'

'God help us all in this room and every one else, to live in this faith, and to die in this faith, for Jesus Christ's sake. This is the only faith to live and die in.' Then after pausing for some time, his voice rang out, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life—eternal—eternal life.' And yet again, after a long pause, we heard him faintly say, 'It is necessary for each one of us to follow in the steps of our great Master. Let nothing come between us and this.'

'Then . . . he fell asleep in Jesus.' 2

Selborne.

LORD SELBORNE (Sir Roundell Palmer) was, like Lord Hatherley, a Sunday-school teacher; and edited the *Book of Praise*, one of the best known collections of Christian hymns.

Halsbury.

At the anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society (1888) LORD HALSBURY spoke as follows:

¹ Memoir of Lord Hatherley, in *The Crown of the Road*, by Charles Bullock, B.D., p. 207.

² Brief Memories of Hugh McCalmont, First Earl Cairns (1885), pp. 81, 82.

'In the earlier ages of the Christian Church, one of its noblest and best told us that if we believed the Scriptures proceeded from God, and that the world of creation was His, we must expect to find the same difficulties in the Scriptures that we found in the creation; and I could not help thinking the other day, in reading the preface to Bishop Butler's Analogy, and looking at the first chapters of that great Archbishop of Dublin who wrote upon the Atonement, that each of those great authorities was referring to what he called the two great polemical questions of that day; and when new attacks were made upon Christianity, and I looked around me and found symptoms of hostility to the Word of God, I recognised the fact that in past days there had been the same attacks, and yet the word of promise abides that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Each age protests against the danger incident to itself, and perhaps exaggerates the danger. But I confess I am much impressed with the fact that in our days those attacks sometimes come from the place which is dedicated to the teaching or religion; and I have no sympathy with, or desire to exhibit any liberality to, those who think proper to bring their doubts into the Christian pulpit. I would say, as the prophet of old said, "If the Lord be God, follow Him; if Baal, follow him." We have no doubt had, in the literature of our time, spread wide-cast a sort of sentimental mixture of Buddhist religion with a religion which I am unable to give any definite name to, but which seems entirely to forget the religion of the Gospel.

"Well, what is the remedy for all this? There are, no doubt, admirable treatises intended to influence religious thought. My belief is that the real remedy is the diffusion of God's Word. Let these people have their doubts. Let them read the Sacred Books of the East, with reference to which I think the Professor of

Sanscrit at Oxford has conferred invaluable benefit or his countrymen in the description which he has given of them in, I believe, more than one address to this Society. Let them read what they please, and let them strive, even with the expedients of the fashionable novel, to bring disbelief into your drawing-rooms; yet I belief the weapon that must and will conquer is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." I am the last who would attempt to deprecate the use of our reason. We are given our reason to examine and prove all things, and to "hold fast that which is good." But it is impossible not to know that there is a selfworship, a sort of notion deifying the intellect of man above the revelation of God; and when that evil prevails amongst us, let us draw back to the first Fountain, to the pure water of the well of life, which comes from the Word of God, and it will sweep away all this evil.'1

Mr. Gladstone bears the remarkable testimony that, of sixty British Statesmen with whom he was associated in the ministry of Queen Victoria, all but three or four were professing Christians:

'Talk of questions of the day, there is but one question, and that is the Gospel. It can and will correct everything needing correction. All men at the head of great movements are Christian men. During the many years I was in the Cabinet, I was brought into association with sixty master minds, and I could not have named more than perhaps about three or four of whom I had any reason to suppose that they were in sympathy with the sceptical movement. My only hope for the world is in bringing the human mind into contact with divine revelation.' ²

Bible Society Monthly Reporter, June, 1888.

² Acknowledged in letter to Editor, Present Day Tracts.

OBJECT IN QUOTING THE FOREGOING TESTIMONIES.

Nothing could be further from our wish or intention, than to argue that the Bible is the God's word because certain great men have believed it to be so. For us it is sufficient that Faith in implicit faith in the Bible is not incompatible not incom with the possession and exercise of the highest great powers of the human mind. When men of such intellectual calibre as those whose names have just been mentioned not only revere the Bible as a whole, but are able to make it in detail (precisely as they make the phenomenon of nature) a subject of life-long study, and are able to discover in it year after year as long as they live, fresh proofs of the wisdom, power, and glory of God, precisely as they find proofs of the same in the books of Nature, surely a presumption at least is established that there is in the books of Revelation as well as in those of Nature something worthy of the investigation of the greatest of men.

Another object has been to show the erroneousness of the opinion that Christianity has been given up by intelligent men in Europe. The question with which we started has, we submit, been most fully and satisfactorily

patible with intellect.

Educated men not losing faith in Christianity.

answered: Are educated men losing their belief in Christianity. 1 That many of them are surrendering it, on various grounds, must be sorrowfully granted. But even among these, we have shown what involuntary homage has been rendered to the majesty and power of the religion of the Bible. It is only the shallow or ill-informed who will sneer at it, or will dismiss its claims as unworthy of serious consideration. We have shown, too, how in every department of human thought many of the ablest and wisest have owned its truth, and have accepted it as possessing the supreme claim in their faith and obedience. The testimony of such men, may at least lead the sceptical to reconsideration. It is all we ask, for we believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead the really sincere enquirer into the right way.

There should also be prayer for Divine light. This following prayer, which illustrates so beautifully how we may ask for light from above, is attributed to St. Augustine, and is contained in one of the volumes under the heading, in the British Museum Catalogue, of the 'Supposititious Works of St. Augustine.'

^{&#}x27;O Lord God, Thou Divine Word, who art the light, by whom light was made, who art the way, the truth, and the life, in whom there is neither darkness, error,

¹ See p. 7.

vanity, nor death. Thou art the light, without which darkness blindeth us; Thou art the way, without which error deceiveth us; Thou art the veritie, without which vanity allureth and deludeth us. Thou art the life, without which death vanquisheth us. Say the word, O Lord, let light be made, that I may see the light, and eschew darkness; that I may see the way, and shun error; that I may see the veritie, and avoid vanitie; that I may see life, and escape death. . . . Enlighten me, O Lord and my light, enlighten me, I say, thy poor blind servant, sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, and guide my feet into the way of peace.' 1

CONCLUSION.

Mr. Gladstone, in 1890, as an old man well conclusion. acquainted with the progress of science and with the attacks made upon Christianity during his long life, has written a book entitled, The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture. The following extract expresses his views with regard to the future of the Bible:

'They [the present observations| lead upwards and onwards to the idea that the Scriptures are well called Holy Scriptures; and that though assailed by camp, by battery, and by mine, they are nevertheless a house builded upon a rock, and that rock impregnable; that the weapon of offence which shall impair their efficiency for aiding in the redemption of mankind has not yet

See also, Pious Breathings: being the Meditations of St. Augustine, etc. Made English by G. Stanhope, Dean of Canterbury. 4th edition, 1714, p. 174.

¹ A Heavenly Treatise of Comfortable Meditations and Prayers written by St. Augustine, (p. 202). Translated by 'the R. F. Antony Batt, Monke, of the Holy Order of St. Bennet,' 1624.

been forged; that the Sacred Canon, which it took (perhaps) two thousand years from the accumulations of Moses down to the acceptance of the Apocalypse to construct, is likely to wear out the storms and the sunshine of the world, and all the wayward aberrations of humanity, not merely for a term as long, but until time shall be no more.'1

1 Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture, p. 8.



THEOLOGY

AN INDUCTIVE AND A PROGRESSIVE SCIENCE.

BY

JOSEPH ANGUS, M.A., D.D.,

Author of "The Bible Handbook."



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;

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Argument.

I. THEOLOGY an inductive science.

Bacon's suggestion that Divinity which is founded or Scripture should be studied inductively. How far the light of Nature helps. Results of induction in science. It ascertains facts and causes. Illustrated. How far deduction is allowable. Induction applied to Theology: Sin, Depravity, Christ's work. Ages of theological study. In Scripture (1) Facts and doctrines are both revealed. (2) The good interpreter is the good theologian. (3) The difficulty of forming a Scriptural system: the meaning, the place of each truth, and the expression of it in common language. (4) Solute generalisations. (5) How far a complete system is possible. Advantages of the study.

II. Theology a progressive science.

In what senses progress is possible. (1) In the exact knowledge of words and constructions: importance of this knowledge illustrated. (2) In the grouping of facts and principles: The Creeds on depravity and its connection with Adam. (3) In the summing up of truth in human words. The Trinity. Eras of study of truth. Conditions of progress. Solute generalisations progressive—illustrated.

Advantages of the acceptance of these principles in individual character and in the Churches of Christ.

THEOLOGY AN INDUCTIVE AND A PROGRESSIVE SCIENCE.

-andrew

I. THEOLOGY AN INDUCTIVE SCIENCE.



r is now more than two hundred and Bacon's eighty years since Bacon surveyed the globe of the intellectual world, and suggested how the whole might be more

completely occupied and cultivated-either for beauty or for fruitfulness. Last of all the districts he describes is "sacred and inspired divinity," where he notes that no "space or ground lieth vacant and unsown, so diligent have men been either in sowing of good seed or in sowing of tares."1

Two things he concludes in relation to divinity: First, that it is founded only on the Word of God, Divinity and not properly upon the light of Nature: and then, Scripture that the great principle of induction is as applic- inductively. able to it as to secular science. The phenomena of Nature are the subjects of inquiry in natural philosophy. The texts and teaching of Scripture are the subjects of inquiry in theology. "What findest thou?" is the grand question of the philo-

founded on

Advancement of Learning, Works ii., p. 299. Montagu's edit.

sopher; "What readest thou?" is the grand question of the divine. Philosophy is perfected when it sums up in generalised facts, or it may be in some cases, in generalised causes, all we observe. Theology is perfected when it sums up in generalised truth or precept all we read. In each case, the facts and the texts respectively are the sources and the limits of our knowledge.

How far the light of Nature helps.

On the first of Bacon's conclusions-That theology is founded only on the Word of God-it is not now intended to insist. "The Bible alone the religion of Protestants," is a principle generally recognised. It may, therefore, be taken as granted in this inquiry. Bacon notes "that sacred theology ... is grounded only upon the Word and oracle of God, and not upon the light of Nature," and he further adds that "the true limits and use of reason in spiritual things," as "a kind of divine dialectic, hath not been sufficiently inquired and handled."2 He holds in brief that God's will, whether on points of faith or of duty, is not to be ascertained with anything like perfection by natural light. There are, indeed, some natural "conceits of virtue and vice." Truth, when revealed, does commend itself to those inward instincts of men which we call conscience, and which is "the sparkle of the purity of our first estate." Only these instincts

Advancement of Learning, Works ii., p. 301.

² Ibid., p. 303.

rather condemn vice than inform of duty. They rebuke, but they fail to renew. Besides this office of reason, or of conscience rather, it can examine and ascertain the meaning of inspired teaching. It can help us to form conceptions of revealed mysteries, and it can draw practical inferences from the truth that is revealed. We may use Nature to interpret and define what is inspired. We may use Nature to conceive, to illustrate, and to defend it; we may use Nature to apply inspired truth to practical ends. But if we go further, our conclusions become human speculation, mere guesses at truth, and are entitled to such authority only as their reasonableness justifies. To man's tendency to exercise his wisdom on things not revealed, or beyond the limits within which Scripture has revealed them, Bacon ascribes much variety of speculation and many of the controversies that have divided and weakened the Church.

Bacon's principle of induction was accepted by Results of the most eminent inquirers of the seventeenth century; and by the end of that century it had changed the state of all the physical sciences. In the year 1600 there was no science in England. In the year 1700, men were questioning Nature in all her departments; and the grandest mechanical generalisation of any age—that of gravitation had been completed, and applied to the explanation

of both earthly and heavenly phenomena. The principle itself has been repeatedly explained and defended; two of the ablest exponents of it, Sir John Herschel and Dr. Whewell, belonging to our own century. And yet on the application of this principle to theology we have no satisfactory treatise. There are considerations, indeed, in the case of theology that make the application of it less important. Scripture is a revelation of laws—that is, of generalised facts, as well as of particular instances. A devout reader of the Bible will often gather from single texts a complete Scripture truth, and even a complete system. Every man, moreover, who compares Scripture with Scripture, and generalises the lesson, practises induction, and is doing the very thing on which Bacon insists. All this is conceded; only it may be questioned whether the importance of the principle is fairly apprehended, and whether a large amount of mischievous unbelief, and of equally mischievous controversy, is not owing to the neglect of it. Next to a teachable, reverential, and loving spirit, the most hopeful thing for the Christian Church would be the more intelligent application of the great principle of the Baconian philosophy to the study of Scripture. Indeed, rightly understood, that principle is a teachable spirit applied to the regulation of religious inquiry.

¹ See, for example, Ephes. i. 3-7; Titus ii. 11-14.

The underlying truth on which Bacon's philoexplained in the roots is that man is simply the interpreter examining sophy rests is that man is simply the interpreter of Nature: "Man, the servant of Nature, understands as much as his observation of it, either with regard to things or the mind, permits him; and neither knows nor is capable of more." His rules, as explained by his followers, are simply:— Observe carefully the facts; get at their significance; classify them; state them in generalised terms. If facts are connected, as cause and effect, state the connection; and if the facts show how the cause works, give the explanation. The generalised statement of facts is called a law; the generalised statement of the connection of cause and effect is called a cause, or law of causation—the highest acquisition of knowledge, seldom reached even in the sciences that are most familiar to us. Conjectures on supposed laws and on supposed causes there may be at all stages. They help and guide inquiry; but induction and knowledge of comprehensive truth there is none till we reach the laws themselves.

It is important to explain what these distinctions mean. Philosophers in the Middle Ages had noticed that water ascends in a pump when the raising of the piston-rod creates a vacuum. They had noticed also that if a tube, closed at the top, be filled with any liquid, and be reversed with its

¹ Novum Organum,

open end in water, the liquid remains in the tube. A careless observer might generalise these facts, and say that liquids ascend and fill tubes when emptied of air. That would be a generalisation of the particular phenomena, hasty and inaccurate, indeed, but still professing to represent simply the facts. Such a generalisation, when accurate, is called a law. Trying to explain the cause or reason of the phenomenon, it is conceivable that an inquirer might say that "Nature abhors a vacuum," and, therefore, she instantly fills up the vacant space which the withdrawal of the air creates, or declines to leave the tube which the water has filled. This generalisation would be, if accurate, a cause. It generalises the explanation of the fact, as the former generalised the fact itself. More careful inquiry corrects both conclusions. No exhaustion of air from a tube will raise water more than about thirty-two feet. And mercury will not ascend a tube or remain above thirty inches. These facts correct the law. They also suggest the inaccuracy of the supposed cause; for Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum ceases, it seems, for mercury at thirty inches, and for water at two-and-thirty feet. A little further inquiry led to the conclusion that the column of fluid was kept in its place by the weight of the atmosphere. That is a law of causation, and the discovery was at once applied to practical purposes. A tube was graduated, and became a barometer. Here we have the fact, the law, the cause, and the practical inference.

Similarly in another department it had been found, by laborious calculations from the observed places of the planets, that those bodies move round the sun in orbits whose forms had been ascertained and in periods bearing defined relations to their distances from the sun. These discoveries were laws-classified facts set forth in general terms. It was reserved for Newton to explain these motions, and the more familiar motion of the moon round the earth and of a stone dropped or thrown above the surface of the earth by the marvellous hypothesis that every particle of matter attracts every other with a force varying inversely as the square of the distance. This hypothesis was found by further investigation completely to explain the motions of the planets and moon, and the doctrine of gravitation became established as the discovery of a truth. This discovery is the discovery of a law, so far as it represents a universal fact; and it is the discovery of a cause, so far as it explains many phenomena. In both respects, it is simply the representative of facts generalised. The practical applications of this law are almost endless.

Though these processes are accurately defined as induction, and mere hypothesis has been rebuked,

How far deduction is allowable.

it must be carefully noted that hypothesis is often useful, and that deduction, or the application of supposed principles to the explanation of facts, is as frequent in modern discovery as induction itself. Only, this deduction is practised to ascertain whether the supposed law is general, and to verify it. Sometimes deduction helps the inquirer to anticipate later discovery; as when Newton predicted that the earth would be found to be an oblate spheroid—a sphere flattened at the poles and bulging out at the equator, if the material there is free to move; and the prediction was verified by the mensuration of the French Academicians. Such predictions are among the most satisfactory proofs of the accuracy of the inductive process, though they are themselves examples of deduction.

Applied to theology.

Let us now apply these principles to theology. Here the texts of Scripture are the phenomena; and the business of the theologian is to ascertain the truths they teach, the duties they enjoin, and the practical inferences they suggest. The themes they discuss include—God, and Man, and Salvation, whether in relation to individuals or to the association we call the Church.

Keeping to the simplest questions, and to the most general statement of them—Are men sinners? Clearly, the tenor of the teaching of the New

Sin.

Testament is, that "if we," any of us, "say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," and that "by deeds 1 John i. 3. of law there shall no flesh be justified" before Rom. iii. 20. God Does sin affect men's hearts and their character, or only their acts? Here again the answer is plain: it is the evil tree that bringeth Matt. vii. 17. forth corrupt fruit. The renewal of the gospel is a change that begins within, and works outwardly till the whole man is renewed.

Borrowing a phrase from our Creeds, may we say Depravity. that this depravity of human nature is total? This word is not found in the Bible, and the use of it can be justified only on the supposition that it represents fairly the sum of its teachings. "All have sinned," and by deeds of law "no flesh can be Rom. iii. 23. justified," is the language and the very argument of the Epistle to the Romans. If, therefore, by total is meant universal, "total depravity" is a fair summary in common language of Divine teaching. The word, however, has other meanings, and we must first define it before an intelligent answer can be given to the question. Does it mean that every man not yet converted is as bad as he can be? In that sense men are not totally deprayed; for "evil men and seducers wax worse 2 Tim. iii. and worse." Does it mean that all men are equally because totally depraved? In that sense men are not totally depraved, for there is endless diversity of character and of punishment. But if it means

that sin has touched and corrupted every part of our nature-blinding and weakening our understanding, perverting our affections, darkening, misleading, and searing our conscience—in that sense total depravity does seem a doctrine of Scripture, and even a conclusion of experience. All this explanation amounts to is, that every faculty would have been nobler and holier, but for sin. moreover, it means that every act of imperfectlysanctified nature is wanting in holiness, either through some deficiency in its measure, or some fault in its motives, or through the want of that regard for God's will and claims which lies at the foundation of all Divine virtue; then again total depravity seems a necessary induction of explicit Scripture teaching. Whether it be so or not, it illustrates the principle—that the human summary is to represent exactly the full import of the texts.

Extent of the Creeds.

Can we define more clearly the extent of this depravity? What say the Creeds? Not that we necessarily may accept them; but that we may use them to see whether they represent fairly the statements of the Bible. We turn to the Latin creed—"The Apostles'," as it is called—first given by Rufinus of Aquileia. There we find not one word on the extent of human sinfulness, but simply an avowal of faith in "the forgiveness" of it. We turn to the Greek creed—the "Nicene"

-belonging to the fourth century, and adopted widely in the fifth; and there we find not a word beyond the avowal of faith in Baptism for the remission of sins. We turn to the "Athanasian" creed—the compilation, probably, of Hilary, of Arles, though, no doubt, containing the substance of the teaching of Athanasius; and we find nothing on sin, except that "all must give account," they that "have done good going into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire." We turn to the Articles of the Church of England; and find it said simply that by native depravity it is meant that man is "very far gone (the Latin is, perhaps, rather stronger, 'quam longissime') from original righteousness, and is in his own nature inclined to evil." The language of the Westminster Assembly is much more sweeping. By that "corruption of nature, man is utterly indisposed and disabled, and made opposite unto all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." This last must be understood, of course, of man in his natural state only, without any Divine teaching or restraints.

The reader will not fail to mark the difference between the answers thus given to the question—what is the extent of native depravity. The thing specially to mark, however, is that they are all to be justified and defended only so far as they represent the teaching of God's Word. It is, of

course, the business of the theologian to examine Scripture, and to say precisely what Scripture says—neither more nor less. True theology is the sum of inspired teaching, on each point.

All these questions connected with sin were most fully discussed by the Latin fathers—or we may say, from Augustine to Calvin.

Applied to Christ's work.

Look in the same way at the work of Christ in connection with man's salvation. The simplest form of faith in relation to Him is expressed in the so-called "Apostles' Creed," "I believe in Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," etc. Here the articles of faith are simply translations into common language, of the narratives of the Gospels. The "Nicene Creed" adds to this confession a single clausethat "He suffered for us men and for our salvation;" and the "Athanasian Creed" repeats the phrase without any addition. The later creeds of the English Prayer Book and the Westminster Confession teach besides that Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice without spot unto God, to be a propitiation for the sins of the people, and that through faith we are forgiven. Here again we have statements widely different in fulness; and the only question which the student of theology ought to care to settle is whether and how far Scripture sanctions them.

But beyond these questions on Christ's work,

there are many others which are forced upon us And its by erroneous teaching, or by a devout and careful study of Scripture itself. May we ascend from facts to causes, and affirm that the gift and the death of Christ were intended as an expression of the love of the Father? May we regard the death of Christ as "vicarious" and "propitiatory," as proving somehow that God is just even when justifying him that believes? These questions may be answered in the affirmative; and the answers be defended from Scripture. Has faith in Through Christ a sanctifying tendency, and can we so understand what faith is as to see how it has this tendency; or is the origin of the power of faith one of those mysteries which the Bible has not revealed? If it is so, that to believe in Christ is to believe in the evil and in the desert of sin, in God's resolution to punish it, in God's love to sinners, in God's infinite willingness to forgive, and that holiness is the end of forgiveness; if to believe in Christ is to believe in the fact that we owe our life anew to our Lord. first as Creator, and then again as Redeemer; that after all, His life of self-sacrificing love is to be the model of ours, at once the happiest and the noblest, then it is easy to see how such faith is inseparable from holiness. Probably most Christians will deem these statements to be facts taught in Scripture. Certainly if they are not so taught, we must not hold them as part of inspired truth. If they are

so taught, they are as much portions of inspired truth, though dealing with doctrine and causes, as are the simpler facts with which men are sometimes prone to contrast them.

Historical.

All these questions connected with Christ's work were largely discussed from Anselm to Luther. The discussion of them is identified with the revival of theological learning in modern times.

There are two or three remarks which may serve still further to guard and explain the purpose of this discussion:—

Mistakes. Facts and doctrines both revealed.

1. The distinction sometimes made between the facts of Scripture and the doctrines founded on them—as if the first were Scriptural and the second not, is unjust. It rests on a double mistake. It confounds common facts and Scripture facts; and it overlooks the sense in which the word "facts" is used. In common life there are. no doubt, facts which express no moral truth; but in Scripture nearly every fact is morally significant, and is saturated with spiritual meaning. Rightly to believe the fact, we must believe the truth that underlies it. In philosophy and in natural science it is no doubt true that the fact is one thing, and the inquirer's explanation of it another. But in Scriptural theology, the fact, and the Scriptural explanation of the fact,—the doctrine, as we call it, -rest upon the same authority. The historical

facts of the Bible, and the theological explanations of the Bible, are both set forth in Scripture texts, and both are alike Divine. These texts form the true phenomena, or facts of the science; and they may be studied so as to ascertain laws-generalised facts-and causes. The theology of the Bible is not a human explanation of the phenomena it professes to explain; it is God's explanation of them; and is likely to be proportionately rich in influences that promote man's comfort and holiness.

It must be carefully noted, however, as has been done by Bacon and by later expounders of induction, that the science of simple facts requires much less care than the science of the full explanation of them. The investigation of causes is a much more delicate process than the investigation of phenomena, though both deal with facts only. We must also distinguish, as Bacon has done, between things Advance-"fundamental" and things "perfective." The ii., p. 305. first must be believed by all; the second vary with the Divine dispensations, and may never be fully known.

ment, Works

2. The old saying that the good theologian is Theology the result of really only a good interpreter—bonus theologus est interpretation. bonus textuarius—receives fresh illustration. Theology is simply the complete meaning of Scripture, as that meaning is modified and explained by Scripture itself. That view of the whole which puts the correct meaning upon every part of the

Divine Word, and assigns to every truth or duty such a place both in order and in importance as properly belongs to it, is the true system.

Difficulty of forming a system.

3. The difficulty of forming a Scriptural system is threefold: the interpretation of texts; the assignment of each truth to its proper place; and the summing up of the truth in unexceptionable terms.

4. Besides the methodical interpretation of Scrip-

ture, the result of which is systematic divinity.

Solute generalisations.

"solute." It deals chiefly with particular passages, and contents itself with the generalisation of the truths they contain. Systems he likens to cisterns, whence water is "fetched and derived for use." Solute interpretation he likens to the drawing and receiving of water in buckets and vessels where it springs. The former seems to be more ready, but is

apt to be impure and corrupt; the latter is ever clear and wholesome. Much of Matthew Henry's "Commentary" illustrates Bacon's solute interpretation; more may be seen in Quesnel on the Gospels; most of all in the recent volumes of Lange on the

Advancement, Works ii., p. 306.

New Testament, and of other modern interpreters.

5. Whether it is possible to frame a complete system may be questioned. Perhaps, as Bacon suggests, enough has not been revealed to enable us to comprehend the relation of the different parts. Perhaps the love and holiness

How far a complete system is attainable.

of heaven are as essential as its light, before value of this study. we can rise to "the height of this great argument, and justify the ways of God to man." Yet, on the other hand, men are impelled by their instincts to frame systems, as well as by prevailing error. The question is not between imperfect systems or none; but between systems that distort the truth and divide the Church, and those that honour truth and unite all who believe. Besides, may we not come to agree on things fundamental - even if there be things perfective that are beyond us? Let it be added, that all reverent attempts to understand the Bible God honours with increased insight; that they ever tend to increase our holiness and to form an earnest and noble character. Nor is it uninstructive to note that our greatest authors -Hooker, Bacon, Newton, Locke, Shakespeare, Milton-were all diligent students of Scripture; and that the ablest public men of the most remarkable age in English history owed much of their vigour to the discipline created by the very investigations we venture to commend. From the reign of Edward VI. to the Restoration, our statesmen and thinkers were largely trained by the study of theology. Holiness, light, vigour, unity-such are some of the fruits of reverent and loving meditation on God's law.

II. THEOLOGY IN WHAT SENSE A PROGRESSIVE SCIENCE.

Theology, then, is an inductive science. The texts of Scripture are its facts—and these facts we have to classify and explain; testing each interpretation of them by the rules which Lord Bacon has sketched, and studying the whole in a humble, devout spirit. The theology which gives to each text its proper meaning, and to each text its proper place and due proportion, is the *Scriptural system*.

Theology a progressive science.

A natural question now arises on the subject of these statements. Is theology also a science that admits of progress? And if so, what are the limits and conditions within which that progress is to be attained?

Additions to Scripture not to be expected. First of all, it is important to mark that there is a wide difference between theology and other sciences, as to the materials with which they have respectively to deal. All natural philosophy is based on natural history. The student has first to collect his facts. Before he can erect his temple of science, he must gather his materials, the timber, as Jonson calls it—the sylva, as Bacon calls it,—which he has to use in the building. In all the natural sciences, these materials are daily increasing; and as they increase, the discovery of new laws, and

of wider generalisations, becomes the more likely. In theology, on the other hand, the accumulation of materials is at an end. They are already stored up in Scripture. There was a time when revelation was progressive, because incomplete. God spake in many portions and in many ways to the fathers; but now He has spoken unto us by His Heb. i. 1, 2. Son, and under what is the last dispensation of all. Our hope of progress, therefore, does not rest upon the revelation of new truth, but upon the better understanding of the old; nor is it possible to add to the materials of our knowledge.

This is an advantage. On the other hand, it is Essential doubtful whether God has revealed, or means to reveal in this life, all the principles or facts which are required in order to form a complete system. The laws of the material universe we may, perhaps, know; all the laws of the spiritual universe we probably cannot know, nor do they seem to be revealed. There is a theology of essential truth, which we may study and arrange; but there is also a theology of perfective truth-to adopt Bacen's distinction—which will continue to elude our grasp. There are revealed mysteries; but there are probably many other mysteries which lie within the shadow of God's throne. There we cannot reach or examine them; and without them our system must remain incomplete.

revealed, not a complete

Keeping in mind, then, our advantage—that the

student of theology has in the Bible all the materials of his science, and that his sole business is to interpret, to arrange, and to define them: keeping in mind our disadvantage, that there are facts and perhaps principles not revealed, which are yet essential to the full understanding of the whole; that no progress is possible in the accumulation of materials, and that perfect progress is impossible, from the vastness and sublimity of the theme—of what progress, it may be asked, is this science capable? Of all the progress, we reply, within these limits, of which any science is capable. We may hope better to understand the texts or facts we have to interpret; we may hope better to group and arrange them, so as to reach juster and wider generalisations; and we may hope to express the results in language that shall more exactly represent all the facts, and that shall commend itself to every devout and intelligent Christian. In these directions progress is attainable—even if complete knowledge be beyond our reach. And if any complain of a revelation that is thus incomplete, he has only to keep in mind that there are like mysteries in all the sciences. What the principle of life is, and what is the real nature of Force apart from its mechanical laws, are questions which most eminent philosophers deem to be unknown, and with our present materials perhaps beyond our knowledge.

Nor is it difficult to illustrate the progress that Progress in interprehas been made in these three directions.

tation of rcords

(1) In regard to the interpretation of particular texts, take for example the phrase, "from the Ps. 1. 1. rising of the sun unto the going down thereof." Such texts have been understood and quoted in former days as upholding a system of astronomy that makes the earth the centre. Even as late as Dr. Owen's time, the true theory of Copernicus and Newton was denounced as unscriptural. The progress of science, and a juster appreciation of figurative language, have set these interpretations aside.

The enrolment said to have been ordered by Illustrated, Augustus, about the time when Quirinius was Luke ii. 2. governor of Syria, has created difficulty. Quirinius is known to have been governor A.D. 12. Some critics, therefore, translate the words "was first made, when Cyrenius was governor of Syria," by "was made before," etc., a possible meaning, sanctioned by similar usage in John, though not John i. 15, in Luke. Others translate, "first took effect when." ete. Within the last few years, however, evidence has been found by Dr. Zumpt, which leads to the conclusion that Quirinius was twice governor. If this is so, the meaning may be regarded as settled, and the Authorised Version may remain unchanged.

Eighty years ago, it was the general belief that all

Death of

death—both of man and of brutes—was the result of the first sin. In proof, students appealed to Rom. v., where it is said that "death entered by sin:" and that the whole creation suffers through it. The discoveries of geology send the student again to his Bible. On further examination, he concludes, as indeed the argument of the Epistle itself indicates, and as Calvin maintains apart from all geological inquiry, that it is of man only the inspired author is speaking. The question of the previous existence and death of brutes is consequently left to be settled by its own proper evidence.

Importance of spiritual insight.

In these instances accuracy of interpretation is aided by cultivated common sense, by completer scholarship, by scientific discovery. Sometimes, and indeed often, aid is obtained through the moral and spiritual insight of the student. There are many passages of Scripture which speak of the deceitfulness of the human heart. and of its need of renewal; of the evil of sin. and the punishment due to it; and of the blessedness of a life of self-sacrificing love, formed upon the model of our Lord's. These passages assume the form of precept or of doctrine. Men interpret them, and insensibly tone down their meaning, restrict their application, set aside their literal truth. There are whole classes of commentators, of shrewd sense and ripe scholar-

ship, who are said never to give the deep spiritual meaning of a passage if it is possible to adopt a shallow secular one. Progress in every such case is as attainable as is a higher spiritual life.

There are many questions on which Christians are divided, which are simply questions of interpretation. They have their place in systems; but so much may be said on both sides, that our only security is to appeal direct to the Bible, and to accept its teaching reverently and humbly. Among these questions are—the limits of the passive submission to wrong by nations and individuals, the nature of future retribution, and the personal reign of Christ.

The difficulty of this verbal interpretation is often very great: partly owing to the nature of interprehuman speech, and partly to the different mental and spiritual states of interpreters. Most of the important words of all languages are connotative. They express the general nature of the thing of which we speak, and bring into the mind of the hearer some of its concomitants. Figurative language, which is supposed to be clearer than literal description, is specially subject to this ambiguity. And if the words with which we deal are trans- connotations, lations from another language, the original and the translation have probably each of them their own connotations; and ideas enter into the meaning of the words of the translation which were

never in the mind of the original writer, and something that was in his mind may never have entered the mind of the translator: and so endless misunderstandings ensue. Of two writers, moreover, who describe the same events, each may have marked some only of the things that occurred, and describes them in his own style and words; omitting details of time and place which are important, if an ordinary reader is to form a complete impression of such details, though to the mind of the writer all is perfectly plain without them. No doubt a language that conveyed only one meaning, and made all other meanings impossible, would be a great help; but such a language would not be human speech.

Spiritual deficiencies in men.

And these difficulties are greatly aggravated by those misconceptions of spiritual truth and holiness which are common to all men. If we only knew and felt what sin is, and what God is, how loving and true; if we were so holy and unselfish as not to need a revelation, the probability is that the revelation which now creates our difficulties would be seen to have no serious difficulties at all.

Need of studying original languages. I have said that part of our difficulty arises from the fact that we have to deal with a translation. It ought to be added that when a translation has been made as perfect as any translation can be made, difficulties will still remain which no

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mere translation can remove.... In James (i. 27) for example, it is said that pure religion is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and for a man to keep himself unspotted from the world: a somewhat "strawey" definition, as Luther would have called it. The difficulty is in the word "religion." The Greek means ritual, outward worship, culte (as the French call it). How is God to be worshipped is the question: with beautiful music, in Gothic buildings, with gorgeous ceremonial? The noblest "worship," says St. James, is "charity and purity."

So, in 1 Tim. iii. 16. The mystery of piety (subjective religion)—the beginning of renewal and holiness—is the manifestation of God in the flesh —the life and death and ascension of Christ. The difficulty is in the word "godliness," which naturally suggests in such a context what is called the mystery of the Incarnation; and the lesson is that the mightiest means of working renewal and godliness in human hearts is the incarnation and work of our Lord. Philosophy may deem it foolishness; and Judaism, a weakness and an offence; but to him who believes it is wisdom and power, and it is, in both qualities, Divine. If the Christian expositor would rightly read his English Testament for emphasis and meaning, he must read and study it not in a translation merely, but in the original text. The true emphasis can never be certainly learnt, nor always the true meaning, in any other way.

Principle applied to Scripture difficulties. It may explain the meaning and illustrate the truth of these statements if a few examples be given of the apparent imperfection and substantial accuracy of Scripture language.

Time of the Crucifixion.

In John's Gospel (xix. 14), Pilate is said to have set forth Jesus before the people as He was about to be led away to be crucified at the sixth hour. i.e. (if this is Jewish time) at noon. But at that hour Jesus was already crucified (Matt. xxvii. 45; Mark xv. 33; Luke xxiii. 44). Bengel suggests as the true reading, the third hour (i.e., 9 a.m.), the time when (Mark tells us) Jesus was crucified; but the decisive external evidence is in favour of "the sixth hour." Others suggest that "about the sixth hour," may be any time between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. (Godwin); and, in fact, the Jews indicated the third, sixth, and ninth hours -the time of prayer and sacrifice, by the sound of a trumpet; and when the third hour had been sounded, the sixth was considered as approaching (Grotius). Some of our modern writers affirm that John may have forgotten the time; and that the mistake was immaterial except as rebuking modern theories of what inspiration means. But, apart from Inspiration, is this solution possible? John is careful to give the hour of some of the occurrences he mentions. He had the faculty for

noting the hours, and he expressly tells us that he knew that what he affirmed was true (xix. 35), and yet he and our Lord's mother deemed it immaterial whether our Lord's mortal agony lasted three hours or six! The true explanation probably is that John, who wrote his Gospel after Jerusalem was overthrown and the Jews were scattered, uses Roman time (from midnight to midnight); a mode of reckoning well known in Asia Minor (McLellan). The same reckoning better suits the other passages in which John names the hours (i. 39 and iv. 6); and this explanation is accepted by Le Clerc, Townson, Meyer, Wieseler, Tischendorf, and Westcott.

A very large number of the statements of Scrip- Historical ture on matters of history were once deemed incredible or untrue. They begin with incidents mentioned in the early chapters of Genesis, the kingdom of Nineveh, the early power of the Elamites—or Persians, of the Hittites, the social life and customs of Egypt, the literary progress of early nations; and they extend to the numerous details in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of Paul. They once created very serious difficulties; but most of them are now known as facts which confirm the substantial accuracy of the civil and natural history recorded in both Testaments. There are still statements unexplained or unproved. But the history of Inter-

pretation is in favour of the belief that the one will ultimately be seen to be *clear*, and the other to be *true*. A large and most instructive literature on these subjects belongs to our own times.

Some moral difficulties.

Difficulties of a similar and more serious kind are created by what seems the passionate and revengeful spirit of some of the writers of Scripture. Sometimes it is said that the language is predictive, not imprecatory; sometimes, that the spirit of the ancient economy is very different from that of the Gospel. But neither of these explanations is satisfactory, and many of the passages cannot be so explained. Of course, if they contain utterances of a vindictive spirit, they were wrong, whether speken under the Law or under the Gospel. But is not this the real feeling in most of the cases: God's righteousness is as dear to a good man as His mercy. Under the old economy, as under the Gospel, God's righteousness often seems dormant. Men "call the proud happy, and they that tempt God are even delivered." In this condition of things, the interests of holiness seem endangered, and even the gedly begin to doubt whether there is a righteous God that ruleth in the earth. The truest mercy may be the maintenance of the Law and the punishment of transgressors.

Mal. iii. 15.

And so it is with other ethical questions. There are profound reasons for Scripture language

on atonement and punishment which commend themselves to the awakened conscience and the renewed heart.

It may be added that the more the attention of scholars has been given to the words of Scripture, etymology, prepositions, tenses, construction, verbal parallelisms, etc., the richer and the more striking have been the results of Scripture study. The commentaries of Bengel, Meyer, Lightfoot—not to mention living commentators—are specimens of minute and suggestive criticism, which no thoughtful student can wisely overlook. Sometimes they touch upon great doctrines, as when it is said that the atoning work of our Lord may be proved from a careful study of the words of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. Sometimes such studies remove apparent contradictions (as in the case of Acts ix. 7, compared with the case in Acts xxii. 9), and sometimes they add fresh light and beauty to what is already plainly revealed.

(2) But besides the meaning of texts, the stu- Grouping of texts to dent has to group them. He connects acts with motives, facts with causes, isolated truth with comprehensive principles. And in this department there is as much room for progress as in interpretation itself.

It is clear, for example, that men are sinners. It is clear that they are prone to sin. It is clear that Scripture connects this proneness to sin with

Value of verbal Bible study.

Connection of sin with Adam.

the fall, though without denying the hatefulness of the state itself, or questioning men's guilt in yielding to it. Can we ascertain more precisely the nature of the connection between this state and the first sin, so as to define it, and, if need be, to vindicate it? With this view we compare it with various generalised facts gathered already from Scripture and experience: e.g.—

Hereditary

Parents influence the condition of their children; their health, their worldly prosperity, the difficulties of their moral probation. Probably they transmit intellectual qualities, possibly even moral qualities. May we say, similarly, Adam our first parent has influenced the condition of us all? If so, the connection of our present state with that first transgression is as natural as is the connection of our present state in other respects with the acts or state of our immediate progenitors.

A federal or instituted connection.

But children do not now become mortal through the sins of their parents, nor are they subject to "loss of Eden," or the doom of "eating bread with the sweat of the brow." To some, therefore, it seems better to say that the connection is not natural, based, that is, on any known laws of the human frame, but is instituted, dependent, in fact, on God's appointment. As we are connected with Christ, the head of all who believe, in the great covenant of redemption, so may we be connected with Adam, the head of the race, in what has

proved to be a covenant of condemnation; though had he stood, it might have proved a covenant of life. There are representative men; and to this class Adam may have belonged. This view is called "federal headship;" and so far as it represents the fact that our connection with Adam is dependent rather on God's appointment than on any known laws of our nature, the description is just.

Others again repudiate both explanations, and Organic oneness with maintain that we were all really in Adam, body and soul; not federally, but actually; and that the consequent degradation of our nature by his fall is at once unavoidable and natural. The mystery, they say, needs no further explanation. Such is in brief the doctrine of Julius Müller and of Edward Beecher.

Others again, fearing that this last view tends Law of to materialism, and doubting whether God has told fluence. us how it is that we come to be depraved, are content to meet the moral difficulty, -why do we suffer through that first sin? The arrangement, they say, is part of a universal law, which most regard as beneficent. Every man is personally answerable only for so much of power as he possesses, and will be judged according to the good he has wilfully resisted and the evil he has wilfully done. Only recognise these limits, and it is at once just and kind that the conditions of our probation should be influenced by the acts of others.

In fact, we all owe advantages to the intelligence and energy of our forefathers or countrymen, and disadvantages to their errors or folly. Do away with this arrangement, and social progress is at an end. Our relations with the past and the future all cease, and every human being becomes an isolated unit, incapable of receiving impressions, and incapable of producing them. Such at all events is the Law,—a law apparently essential to our well-being. Of this law the connection of our depravity with Adam is only a particular instance. If the law is itself good, why object to it in this case?

These four explanations are all based on acknowledged principles, found in Scripture and in daily life. Which best meets the fact they are quoted to explain is an important question, much more difficult than the interpretation of texts that announce the fact itself.

Other examples.

Some of the most difficult problems in theology, and some of the greatest mistakes in relation to it, arise from the inaccurate connection of admitted truths. Fatalism is the doctrine of causation, ultra Calvinism of election, Pelagianism of free agency,—each in wrong connections. The different views of the gospel, known popularly as moral and as evangelical, differ mainly in the order in which they connect morality and faith with the way of life. "Be holy, that you may be saved," is the

language of the first; "Be holy, because you are saved," is the language of the second. Practically. the difference in the influence of such teaching on the character is as marked as is the difference in the creed itself.

(3) But after men have fixed the meaning of Summing texts, and have placed all in their true connections, there remains the difficulty of expressing the general truth in appropriate terms. The process The Trinity and its difficulties may be illustrated from the doctrine of the "Trinity."

up truth in general statements.

An intelligent reader of the Bible, trying to The Trinity the formulagather from its teachings a knowledge of the Divine nature, would learn the following truths:

- (a) There is one God; and the grand purpose of revelation is to reveal and exalt Him, and to put down all idolatry.
- (b) The Lord Jesus Christ is represented in Scripture as man and as God: as man, for He has human names, and human properties, physical and mental, He sustained human relations, He became "flesh" as God, for He existed and acted before His incarnation; He laid aside, and is again to resume the glory He had with the Father; He possessed Divine attributes,—eternity, almightiness, omnipresence, self-subsisting life; He is called by Divine names, God, Lord, Jehovah; He does Divine acts, receives Divine honours, is condemned to death for "making Himself" God, and

then ever after appears throughout the inspired volume as the object of adoration both in heaven and on earth.

(c) There is a Holy Spirit, against whom men may sin, who abides in the Church, is our Teacher and Comforter, who spake of old by the prophets, who appoints men as pastors and as overseers of the churches, who still helps our infirmities, distributes to us as He will our gifts, renews and sanctifies all the redeemed. It is into His name we are baptized, it is His fellowship that is ever with the Church, to Him are given Divine names, and to Him are ascribed Divine attributes; while, as we have just seen, He is ever spoken of in connection with a personal character.

If the intelligent reader whom we have supposed were to put these interpreted facts into their simplest general form, he would probably say, "God, the Father of mercies, has looked in pity on our lost condition, and has provided salvation through His Son, who took upon Him the nature of man, died for our sins, and returned to an endless life of power and activity for the security and happiness of all who obey Him; and by His Spirit works in us all that is necessary to our salvation; while to both the Son and the Spirit ascriptions are made by inspired teachers of acts and dignities that imply personality, and are inconsistent with any other than a nature truly Divine." Yet is

there one God, and the Bible is given to put down all idolatry.

If the reader were a metaphysician and a scholar, anxious to define his thoughts, and familiar with the history of Christian doctrine, he might say, that-"In the one living and true God there are, by a mode of subsistence we do not fully understand and cannot explain, three conscious individualities or persons, with one essence."

All these generalisations, however, are wanting in brevity; for convenience, therefore, the reader generalises still further, and announces that Scripture reveals a "Trinity in Unity."

Or suppose that this intelligent reader of the The work of Bible is examining the teaching of Scripture on the work of Christ. In the process of investigation he comes across passages that speak (a) of His bearing the curse for us, in such a way that, if He had not borne it, we must; (b) of His bearing our sin in His own body on the tree; His life accepted, as in the case of the ancient sacrifices, for ours; and (c) of our obtaining life through His death; so that but for Him we must have died. These passages are examined and compared; and the quality of our Lord's work they imply he describes by a single name: it is "substitutionary," or "vicarious."

These are but specimens. We may easily find illustrations on a larger scale in the history of the Church itself.

Subjects of study in different periods of Church history. There is a felicitous division of theology familiar to most students. The first centuries of the Christian Church were largely busied with the study of the Divine nature—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The chief writers were the fathers of the Greek and Asiatic churches: and the result of their investigations is set forth in the Nicene Creed, and more fully in the Athanasian. The subjects discussed belong to *Theology* proper, the science of the Divine nature.

Anthropology. When Scripture came to be studied a little later at Rome, the condition of man was the chief theme examined:—the effect of the fall, the extent of depravity, the doctrine of a Divine purpose in relation to human agency, the freedom of the will. On one side was Pelagius, and on the other Augustine. Augustinianism—or what was afterwards called Calvinism—was the result. The subjects discussed belong to Anthropology—the science of human nature and sin.

Soteriology.

Towards the close of the Middle Ages, when the study of theology was revived, when Anselm and Lanfranc directed attention to the importance of more careful thought, it was to the work of Christ that inquiry was directed—Why, in order to save men, must God become man? Three hundred years later, Luther prosecuted this inquiry still further, defined and asserted the doctrine of Justification by Faith. These themes belong

properly to Soteriology—the Science of the Plan of Salvation.

To this nineteenth century belongs the settle- other subjects. ment of what great questions? Inspiration-Theopneustiology; the Doctrine of the Church-Ecclesiology; the Doctrine of the Coming of Christ, and other "last things"—Eschatology. Let us hope that our age may prove the age of the reverential examination of all Bible-truth; the age of increasing light and love!

This progressive fulness of explanation of The Creeds. Scripture truth may be illustrated from the Creeds-the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. In the first, it is said simply, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." In the Nicene Creed, the utterance is much more full and clear: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of (i.e., from or out of) God, Light of Light, very (i.e., true, real) God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made." Of the Holy Ghost, it is said in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost." In the Nicene Creed it is-"I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father" [the Latin Church adding, "and the Son", "who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;

who spake by the prophets." Here every added clause represents protracted controversy, was intended to correct some error, and to express more explicitly a Scripture truth. In the Athanasian Creed, the relation between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is still more elaborately explained. The minuteness of its distinctions forms a striking contrast to the simplicity of the Apostles' Creed; and yet it professes to teach only the "Catholic Faith," and is avowedly based on the Bible.

Whether or not we accept the teachings of the Greek fathers and Athanasius, of the Latin fathers and Augustine, of the reformers and Luther, it is clearly implied that theology admits of progress of some kind, that its truths are better understood and more accurately explained in one age than in another.

Which views are preferable we need not now decide. It is sufficient to note that men who profess the same truth may describe it differently. The aim must be to say just as much as Scripture says, neither less nor more; and to say it, if possible, so as to secure the concurrence of all Christian men.

Summary of conditions of progress.

From these examples, it is not difficult to see on what conditions true progress depends. There must be the diligent study of the inspired text, with all the helps which scholarship, and science, and a devout heart can supply. There must be the exercise of a comprehensive and accurate judgment—of what in natural science would be called a philosophic spirit; there must be insight, genius, the mysterious faculty that anticipates discovery and guides it. The process will be aided by prevailing error, and the necessity which Christian men feel of defending God's own truth; and of distinguishing between it and all human additions. And it will be perfected by the gift of that gracious Spirit, to whom our unity is as dear as our holiness; and who has promised that men shall "see Isa, lii. 8. eye to eye when the Lord returneth to Zion!" (R.V.)

It has been intimated that, besides this system- solute atic theology, there are generalisations of particular lisations. texts, which Bacon notes as even more fruitful in instruction than theological systems. Of progress in such generalisations there is really no end, while each has the advantage of suggesting lessons immediately it is known.

Look, for example, at the Lord's Prayer. The The Lord's simplest generalisation is that it is a model prayer in form, as well as in thought, and is to be repeated in every service. Examining it more closely, it divides itself into seven petitions: three for the progress of God's kingdom, three for our individual victory over sin in its guilt and power, and one, an intermediate petition, for the moderate supply of

our daily wants. Ought not like blessings to occupy a proportionate place in the prayers of the Church till the end of time? If we seek first and supremely the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all other things will be added to us. In temporal things it looks as if we cannot ask too little; nor in spiritual things too much.

Examining it more closely still, may we not regard the whole as descriptive of the spirit of acceptable supplication? It is a filial spirit, recognising God as "Father;" it is a catholic spirit, recognising the universal brotherhood of believers -"Our Father;" it is a reverential spirit, a missionary spirit, an obedient and submissive spirit; it is a dependent and contented spirit, that looks to God for "daily bread," and asks no more; it is a penitent and forgiving spirit; it is a holy, watchful spirit, not rushing into temptation, but seeking to be kept out of it; and if the doxology is included, it is an adoring spirit. "After this manner," seems thus to have deeper significance; and each clause generalised suggests an immediate lesson, besides teaching a universal truth.1

1"That form of writing in divinity, which,...in my judgment, is most rich and precious, is positive divinity collected upon particular texts of Scriptures in brief observations; ... a thing wherein this age excelleth. For I am persuaded ... that if the choice and best of those observations upon texts of Scriptures, which have been made dispersedly in sermons within this, your Majesty's island of Britain by the space of these forty years and more, ... had been set down in a con-

Thus regarded, every chapter of the Bible will be found a well-spring of thought never to be exhausted, a collection of beautiful truths as various as the circumstances and spiritual insight of the student, as rich as the grace and resources of the blessed Spirit who first gave, and is still ready to explain and apply the whole.

passages.

The purpose to which these pages are devoted Importance is one of deepest interest—closely connected with the spread of truth, the growth of Christian life and the harmony of the Churches of Christ. If Christians will study the Bible, and resolve to hold what it teaches, neither more nor less, we shall have at once an increase of intelligence and holiness and love. There may still be differences in the qualities which men bring to bear upon the study-differences in learning, in devoutness, in spiritual insight, and in the amount of Divine teaching given to each: and they may differ even in their appreciation of these gifts. But each gift will help the other, and we shall have oneness on great truths, and mutual forbearance on the rest. Bacon's principle has changed the physical

of the discussion.

tinuance, it had been the best work on divinity which had been written since the apostles' times."-The Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human, Works, vol. ii., pp. 312 and 313.

sciences; he suggests that we should apply it to theology, and that we shall have results as mighty and even more blessed. It will prepare the way for that substantial unity which is among the forces that are to lead the world to believe (John xvii. 21).



MODERN SCEPTICISM

· COMPARED WITH

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

BY THE

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.
56 PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

Argument of the Tract.

THE diffusion of Scepticism in the present day. Its peculiar nature and characteristics. Its vagueness as compared with its claims to be 'scientific.' Its boasted honesty, the enthusiasm it inspires, and its earnest search after a new faith. The Tract considers Scepticism under three heads: (1) Earnest and melancholy, illustrated by Mill's theistic doubts, and Greg's 'Enigmas of Life'; (2) Light-hearted and content, illustrated by Mr. Laing's brighter aspects of Scepticism, as a view of life and the universe; which, as compared with the gloom pervading the previous forms of Scepticism, is shown to be irreconcilable with a serious inquiry into truth, and the discussion of questions of such high import: (3) Imaginatively presented, as by some modern Poets and Novelists, who have expressed in æsthetic forms the tendencies of modern thought. Then follow a note on the perplexities occasionally felt by Christian believers, as contrasted with un-Christian Scepticism, and a general survey of and remarks on Scepticism, to collect into one point of view its drift and scope. It is compared and contrasted with Christianity as to their respective influences on (a) ethics, (b) progress, and (c) the practical affairs of life. The Tract then proceeds to point out the duty of Sceptics, in view of the presumption being vastly in favour of Christianity under each of these heads, to reconsider its claims; especially to inquire whether it does not afford a complete and satisfactory basis for the Faith. which is the condition of all goodness and nobleness; the responsibility of unhinging the faith of thousands who have neither the skill nor the time to examine these claims in the light of modern science, without providing a sufficient substitute for the disowned faith which can support average humanity in its struggles and efforts. Reasons are given why Scepticism is, and ever must be, an unsatisfactory system of religious thought; the attempts of Sceptics to reinstate Christianity as a spiritual force, when emptied of its supernatural contents. furnishing indirect testimony to the superior efficacy of the latter. Thence, as well as from the history of similar conflicts. ending in the conquest of Christianity in the past, the final victory is inferred of faith over unbelief.

MODERN SCEPTICISM COMPARED WITH CHRISTIAN FAITH.

- modern

T cannot be denied that 'a wide-spread Charactertendency exists in this, and still more in other countries, to give up a belief in Christianity, and that the scepticism

of the present day is very far more serious and scientific than was the deism of the last century.' 1 Nor can it be denied that the last quarter of the present century bears this special mark of a 'swift change and abandonment of faith,' 2 and that whilst in some cases it leads men to utter unbelief. in other cases it sends them, wearied by incessant doubts and questionings, into the arms of the Roman Catholic Church, to find rest in blind obedience to an authority claiming to be infallible. Modern literature, including poetry and fiction, is saturated with sceptical sentiments and thoughts. Admitting the fact, therefore, we would point out the importance of examining the nature and claims of this sceptical tendency of the present day, and,

1 James Cotter Morison: The Service of Man, an Essay towards the Religion of the future, p. 241.

² C. Kegan Paul:—Faith and Unfaith, p. 8. This writer has now joined the Church of Rome, after first abandoning the Church of England and passing through the phase of agnostic scepticism.

in so doing, would endeavour to prove that Christianity is not, as the writer of the sentence heading this tract assumes, 'a form of thought unsuited to a scientific age, and therefore no longer tenable by an educated population' (p. 246); but that, on the contrary, a comparative view of Scepticism and Christianity will show the superiority of the latter over the former in more completely satisfying the intellect and the heart, and also as a better guide to life.

Notes of Modern Scepticism.

1. Doubt

The Scepticism of the present day differs from that of other times in two or three essential points. It is a kind of 'dubious doubt,' that shrinks from complete denial of the Christian faith. calling into question the power of Christianity as a religious system, purporting to solve the last problems of life and mind, it admits its superiority over rival systems in this respect. Rank infidelity of an uncompromising nature is not in vogue just now, though it would seem that in some cases doubt, fierce in its antagonism towards Christianity. assumes the character of a decidedly negative creed. But, excepting some pronounced exceptions of this kind, the Sceptic of to-day is often, at least, one in the proper sense of the word, that is, one casting about for the discovery of truth, open to conviction; his attitude of mind is that of anxious inquiry, willing to weigh evidence, to reflect and reconsider whilst hesitating in his doubt, assuming a half-shrinking half-patronizing attitude toward the religion of the majority, with a timorous disinclination to break entirely with traditional beliefs, and yet equally reluctant to sever his connection from fashionable unbelief. This vacillating state of mind, threatening to become chronic as a malady—and Scepticism has been called the malady of the present century—never reaching the acute crisis which may bring with it recovery, constitutes the chief danger of modern Scepticism.

Admitting the right and duty of proving all things, and the danger of accepting any solution of the problem of life with unreasoning faith; avoiding both extremes, affirmative dogmatism, which too often has provided the food for doubt, and dogmatic negation, which but too often has produced a superstitious reaction; acknowledging that there are some subjects of profound speculative interest which demand a cautious and circumspect suspense of judgment, while there are others where certainty, amounting to demonstrative proof, is out of the question; we must maintain at the same time that systematic hesitation, such as neither accepts nor rejects the Christian religion, or such as approaches the question of its truth or falsehood as an intellectual puzzle, interesting indeed, but defying a final solution, is a state of mind unhealthy in itself, and reacting unfavourably on conduct.

When the boundary line between truth and error, faith and unfaith, has become faint like this, the demarcation between good and evil is in danger of becoming more and more effaced; as, indeed, the periods marked by sceptical thought have also been the periods of moral decay. It becomes, therefore, the duty of Christians at such times, the more so in a scientific age which demands accuracy and completeness in the exposition of knowledge, to accentuate more clearly the difference between faith and unbelief, and to contrast the vague and inarticulate nature of Scepticism with 'those things which are most surely believed among us.' 1

2. Its scientific methods.

This suggests another characteristic of modern Scepticism, namely, its scientific bent. The conflict, however, is not so much one between faith and science, as between 'the faith' and the unfaith peculiar to a scientific age, a Scepticism which applies the critical methods of science to the investigation of religious truth, though it admits that the ultimate reason of things is beyond the ken of scientific discovery. Scepticism in the present day amounts to hardness of belief in the Christian verities as tested by scientific criteria; and so it has been defined by one who has been justly called an enthusiast of Scepticism, Mr. Buckle, who says:

¹ Πεπληροφορημένων = 'fully established,' Luke i. 1; cp. Rom. iv. 21, and xiv. 5, where the word stands for the English equivalent of full persuasion amounting to assurance.

'By Scepticism I merely mean hardness of belief; so that an increased Scepticism is an increased perception of the difficulty of proving assertions; or, in other words, it is an increased application and an increased diffusion of the rules of reasoning, and of the laws of evidence. This feeling of hesitation and of suspended judgment has in every department of thought been the invariable preliminary to all the intellectual revolutions through which the human mind has passed; and without it there could be no progress, no change, no civilization. In physics, it is the necessary precursor of science; in politics, of liberty; in theology, of toleration. These are the three leading forms of scepticism; it is, therefore, clear that in religion the sceptic steers a middle course between Atheism and Orthodoxy, rejecting both extremes, because he sees that both are incapable of proof.'1

Scientific Scepticism consists in the difficulty of harmonizing newly-discovered knowledge with the old forms of faith: hence, more than once in the progress and development of human thought, Scepticism has reappeared as an opponent of Christianity, but has invariably helped in bringing out Christian truth more clearly. Such was the speculative Scepticism of Neoplatonism in the fourth century, revived with the revival of classical learning in the fourteenth and fifteenth. Such, too, is its modern representative, when, with the further advance of scientific discovery, it reappeared in the naturalistic revival of the eighteenth and the 'Higher Paganism' of the nineteenth century.

¹ History of Civilization in England, by Henry Thomas Buckle, vol. i., p. 357, note. On instances of modern aggressive Scepticism 'anathematizing belief,' see Spectator, August 15, 1891.

The growth of experimental philosophy, with its tendency to materialism, makes the senses the only avenue to knowledge of the facts of the universe, and applies the methods of physical science to the investigation of revealed truth, thus trespassing on the domain of faith, which lies beyond the sphere of scientific certitude.

'Under the touch of comparative anatomy of creeds all that was imposing and magnificent in the edifice of theology,' says the late Viscount Amberley, in his Analysis of Religious Belief, 'crumbles into dust; systems of thought piled up with elaborate care, philosophies evolved by centuries of toilsome preparation, fall into shapeless ruin at our feet. And all this by the simple process of putting them side by side.'

The process is that of scientific analysis.

3. Its boast of honesty.

Another distinctive note of Present Day Scepticism is its boasted honesty.

'There lives more faith in honest doubt, Believe me, than in all the creeds.'

'There is one moral benefit,' says Professor Huxley, in one of his controversial articles in the Nineteenth Century, 'which the pursuit of science unquestionably bestows. It keeps the estimate of the value of evidence up to the proper mark. . . . Men of science will always act up to their standard of veracity when mankind in general leave off sinning; but that standard appears to me to be higher among them than in any other class of the community.'

This is an advance on Hume, the parent of modern Scepticism, who acknowledged that he left Scepticism behind him when he turned the key on his study, and who accordingly is accused

¹ Nineteenth Century, November, 1887, p. 632.

by a more thorough-going Sceptic of the present day of being only half sincere in his metaphysical Scepticism. 1 And pursuing the path of honest investigation, the modern Sceptic is no longer satisfied with 'that calm assent to a hazv belief,' which satisfied Hume, though 'he fully recognised the impossibility of divining the great secret;' so that

'A vague belief, too impalpable to be imprisoned in formulæ or condensed into demonstrations, still survived in his mind, suggesting that there must be something behind the veil, and something, perhaps, bearing a remote analogy to human intelligence.'2

This last shred of belief, being beyond proof, the Sceptic of the day considers as evidently inconsistent with intellectual integrity.

Another note of Present Day Scepticism is its 4. Its earnestness. A certain form of indolent Scepticism exists, indeed, but it is confined to a small set of modern Epicureans, over-refined intellectually, but not in touch with the more robust Sceptics, who strenuously cling to what they call 'the purely spiritual elements of the Christian faith,' whilst denying its miraculous credentials. And since a convinced doubter makes the best believer, there is hope for such.

Another encouraging trait of modern Scepticism is its strong desire to find a substitute for lost

² Ibid., p. 342.

beneficence.

¹ History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, by Leslie Stephen, vol. i. p. 311.

faith in works of beneficence. 'To work without reasoning,' says Martin in Voltaire's Candide, 'is the only way of rendering life supportable.' This is said in the scoffing spirit of the great French infidel. But in more serious and solemn tones, peculiar to the Scepticism of this country and this century, Professor Froude, in one of his Short Essays on Great Subjects, speaks as follows:

'At the present moment the most vigorous minds appear least to see their way to a conclusion, and a general doubt is coming like a thunderstorm against the wind, and blackening the sky. Those who cling most tenaciously to the faith in which they were educated, yet are themselves perplexed. They know what they believe, but why they believe it, and why they should require others to believe, they cannot tell, and cannot agree. We take refuge in practical work; we believe, perhaps, that the situation is desperate, and hopeless of improvement; we refuse to let the question be disturbed. But we cannot escape from our shadow, and the spirit of uncertainty will haunt the world like an uneasy ghost till we take it by the throat like men.'

This, however, does not satisfy eager minds, and their look-out is for some new form of religion to escape from the intolerable state of blank unbelief. Thus in Von Hartmann's book on the disintegration of Christianity, he speaks of the religion of the future, which in order to become a universal religion in the place of the now obsolete Christianity, must be a 'synthesis of oriental and occidental, of pantheistic and monotheistic religious development, in order to satisfy the intellectual and religious requirements of this new era.' In the

same way Strauss substitutes faith in the universe for belief in a personal God; while others there are who fall back on the religion of culture, or the religion of humanity—which in itself is a proof in evidence of a law of the mind which in the end compels it to seek some resting-place in faith, and which peremptorily refuses a final and irrevocable relapse into sheer non-belief.

In subjecting to further scrutiny these notes of Varieties in Present-Day Present Day Scepticism, which are by no means all represented in any one typical writer, but may be found in each, though in varying proportions, we may for convenience sake consider the representatives of Scepticism under the following three heads: 1. The serious and sad searcher after truth, corresponding to the 'weeping philosopher,' Heracleitus, among ancient sceptics; 2. The cheerful and scientific doubter, representing the 'laughing philosopher,' Democritus, regarding with something of supercilious scorn the soul's soaring on the wings of faith and hope above and beyond this world of matter. 3. The reflecting poet, and painters of life and thought in fiction, in their representation of the phase of Scepticism through which society is passing in the present day, and the popularity of whose writings is an indication of a ready response in the public mind to their sceptical ruminations.

Scepticism.

(1) THE SAD AND SERIOUS SCEPTIC.

(a) J. S. Mill.

The serious

J. S. Mill on the religion of Nature.

John Stuart Mill, as 'the most distinguished of Hume's recent disciples,' and the recognized leader of modern English thinkers of this school, here deserves the foremost place. 'A pathetic desire to find some remnant of truth in the ancient dogmas breathes throughout its pages (the Essay on Theism), and is allowed to exercise a distorting influence upon its conclusions.' Such is the complaint of Mr. L. Stephen, and any reader of the essay referred to, or the essays on Nature and the Utility of Religion, will give full credit to Mill for honestly fighting his doubts, whilst few will deny him the possession of the highest intellectual power, apart from the faculty of faith, in grappling with such problems as here he attempts to solve, together with the power of suppressing emotional tendencies, likely to obscure the vision of pure reason. The pathetic desires which the later sceptic deprecates, should be to us an additional reason for giving full weight to his thoughts, and for listening with unstinted sympathy to one who thus struggles earnestly to arrive at truth. On the question whether Nature is the product of a perfect Being, alike in power and love, he arrives at the conclusion, that 'if made

¹ English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, vol. i., pp. 311, 312.

wholly by such a Being, and not partly by Beings of very different qualities, it could only be a designedly imperfect work, which man in his limited sphere is to exercise justice and benevolence in amending.' In a well-known passage on the cruelty of Nature, he expresses the doubt, and more than a doubt, whether the revelations of science do not forbid us any longer to look through Nature up to Nature's God, in the old way. 'Everything, in short, which the worst men commit either against life or property, is perpetrated on a large scale by natural agents;' and thus 'Nature cannot be a proper model for us to imitate.' He objects to the theory that the severe cruelty of Nature is intended as a moral discipline, founded on the assumption that the goodness of God 'does not consist in willing the happiness of His creatures, but their virtue; and the universe, if not a happy, is a just universe.' For

'If the Creator of mankind willed that they should all be virtuous, his designs are as completely baffled, as if he had willed that they should all be happy; and the order of Nature is constructed with even less regard to the requirements of justice than those of benevolence.'

The germs of human virtue exist, Mill admits, but he doubts whether the growth of morality would be aided by such an exhibition of apparent injustice as that dwelt upon in the following passage.²

¹ Nature, the Utility of Religion and Theism, by John Stuart Mill, pp. 29-31, 37.

² Ibid., p. 58, cf. p. 65.

'If there are any marks at all of special design in creation, one of the things most evidently designed is that a large proportion of all animals should pass their existence in tormenting and devouring other animals. They have been lavishly fitted out with the instruments necessary for that purpose. Their strongest instincts compel them to it, and many of them seem to have been constructed incapable of supporting themselves by any other food. If a tenth part of the pains which have been expended in finding benevolent adaptations in all nature had been employed in collecting evidence to blacken the character of the Creator, what a scope for comment would not have been found in the entire existence of the lower animals, divided, with scarcely an exception, into devourers and devoured, and a prev to a thousand ills from which they are denied the faculties necessary for protecting themselves! If we are not obliged to believe the animal creation to be the work of a demon, it is because we need not suppose it to have been made by a Being of infinite power. But if imitation of the Creator's will as revealed in nature, were applied as a rule of action in this case, the most atrocious enormities of the worst men would be more than justified by the apparent intention of Providence that throughout all animated nature the strong should prev upon the weak.'

It may be remarked in passing, that had this paragraph been written in the light of the most recent science, the sentence about the absence of faculties necessary for self-preservation would have been omitted or greatly modified. But, apart from this, the alternative between omnipotence and goodness would have been less boldly stated, had the writer borne in mind the limitations of human knowledge. The whole case is not before us; and the inference from isolated facts and 'apparent intentions' is rendered nugatory by the obvious incompleteness of our view. And even if we did

have the whole case before us, our answer might have to be that we do not fully understand, but have to trust in One whom we believe to be a God of love as well as of power.

Again, speaking of the mystery which surrounds life, and the room left for religious imagination in its most sublime and lofty attempts to penetrate that which lies beyond the circle by which human existence is girt round, Mr. Mill admits that such efforts of the religious mind may have their uses, though they are apt to operate 'through the feelings of self-interest,' and to lose much of their moral influence by reason of the 'positive twist in the intellectual faculties, implied in ascribing absolute perfection to the Author and Ruler of so clumsily made and capriciously governed a creation as this planet and the life of its inhabitants.' He thinks those are less likely to suffer morally who never attempt to solve the mystery; and, therefore, in the end he falls back on Scepticism as 'the most rational attitude of a thinking mind towards the supernatural, whether in natural or in revealed religion.' 1 Yet whilst speaking of the evidence, amounting, in his view, to a low degree of probability, which points to creation as the work of an intelligent mind 'whose power over the materials was not absolute,' and rejecting 'the notion of a providential government by an omnipotent Being for the good

¹ Loc. cit., pp. 242, 243.

of His creatures,' Mill greatly nullifies his own argument by the admission that this religious idea, as such, is highly favourable to the conditions of human existence.

'We may well conclude,' he says, after dwelling on the unique nature of the character and teaching of Christ as the founder of our religion, 'that the influence of religion on the character which will remain after rational criticism has done its utmost against the evidences of religion, are well worth preserving, and that what they lack in direct strength as compared with those of a firmer belief is more than compensated by the greater truths and rectitude of the morality they sanction.'

Such are the hesitating and inconsistent conclusions of one who may be called the leader of modern Empiricism and scientific Scepticism in English-speaking countries.

(b) W. R. Greg.

W. R. Greg on the Enigmas of Life. In W. R. Greg's Enigmas of Life we have the speculations of a sceptic conversant with business and the practical bearings of religious convictions. Unlike Mill, he was brought up by believing parents, though he afterwards relinquished the faith of Christ; and Mr. John Morley, speaking of his Enigmas of Life, says: 'The complaints, the misgivings, the aspirations of our generation, find in certain pages of Mr. Greg's book a voice of mingled fervour and recueillement, a union of contemplative reason with spiritual sensibility, which makes them

¹ Ibid., p. 256 and ante.

one of the best expressions of one of the highest moods of this bewildered age.' They are written throughout in a minor key; though at the time of penning them, the author says, he felt so happy that he was ashamed of having written the book, and though we are told that the gloom which pervades it throughout is in strong contrast with the 'bright, genial, benevolent, susceptible person' who wrote it.2 This is important, as showing that it was the sceptical opinions of the author which give his writings such a sombre colouring. This habit of quietly brooding over the mystery of life, unrelieved by the comforts of religious faith, left both Mill and Greg in a profoundly sad condition of mind, though in the latter's case we are told expressly he never was happier than when his fortunes were at their lowest ebb.3 He, too, like Mill, puts a high value on religion, though, as he says in his introduction to the Creed of Christendom, an earlier work yet more hostile to Christianity, 'Truth has floated down to us upon the wings of error, treasured up and borne along in an ark built of perishable materials and by human hands.' The standpoint of Mr. Greg is therefore that of a man who rejects the idea of a Divinely inspired revelation, who doubts the accuracy of the gospel record of the life of Christ, denies miracles, and

¹ See Memoir prefixed to 18th Edition of Enigmas of Life (1891), p. viii.
² Ibid., xli. and xlii.
³ Ibid., xxviii.

calls in question the feasibility of leading a life in the present day consonant with the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount; whilst in one of his latest essays he assumes that all truths which can be apprehended are also discoverable by human reason. In facing, therefore, the problems of existence, he is baffled and perplexed by their impenetrable mystery. Yet he tells us in the preface to these Enigmas of Life, that he approaches them with an assumption of 'the existence of a Creator and a continued life beyond the grave'; though, he carefully adds, 'I obviously do not hold these points of the Christian creed on the ordinary Christian grounds.' 1 Thus to evade the two deepest and darkest of all problems, he acknowledges to be inconsistent; but he cannot get rid of these pre-conceptions inherited from his Puritan forefathers. To him, they are beliefs 'very nearly reaching the solidity of absolute convictions.' 'Of actual knowledge, we have simply nothing;' yet whilst the difficulty of believing in a personal Creator is immense, belief in evolution without Him is insuperable. As to belief in a future life, Mr. Greg claims his right to hold it, 'as to me, though not to all, the most credible belief.' In opposition to creed-makers and 'infallible creed-concoctors,' who attempt too much, giving clearness and precision to beliefs, he says of

¹ Ibid., Preface, p. lxxxv.

faith in a future life: 'Let it rest in the vague, if you would have it rest unshaken.' He then proceeds to give us a glimpse of the 'torture chamber of the soul' in sceptical minds like his own, in their attempt to reconcile the moral and physical phenomena around them on the assumption of a supreme Being at once all-wise, all-good. and almighty, and shows how thousands have made shipwreck of the faith; for they found it inconceivable 'why infinite Love should have created a scene of teeming life, of which the most salient feature is universal conflict and universal slaughter,' and that 'infinite goodness and illimitable power should have created a world so rife with evil—into which evil entered so easily, and ruled with so predominant a sway.' That problem is insoluble, says Mr. Greg, except on the supposition that the Deity 'works and lives under limitations and conditions' which would relieve the problem of evil of half its gloom and difficulty, and make it possible for us 'to believe in and worship God, without doing violence to our moral sense or denying or distorting the sorrowful facts that surround our daily life.' 1

Premising thus much, our author approaches the problem of realisable ideals, since 'the contrast between the ideal and the actual of humanity lies as a heavy weight upon all tender and reflective

¹ Ibid., pp. ci., cii.

minds.' He points out the limits of human development, including those limitations in time, space, and other circumstances which stand in its way; and then dwelling on the significance of life and its secret, he endeavours to give a reply to the cry de profundis, in giving expression to the hope, 'dim and vast,' of a final solution 'elsewhere.'

Such is, in outline, the general purport of Mr. Greg's philosophy of life. But the impression left on our mind as to the result of such broodings, is that doubt, according to the confession of those who most seriously entertain it, renders man melancholy; and that so far from bracing and nerving him for action, sceptical reflections on the enigmas of life have a lowering effect on the tone of thought; that, in the language of Mr. Arnold, 'a sad lucidity of soul' 'looks languidly round on a gloom-buried world.' 1 It must not, however, be supposed that all thus deprived of 'peace and joy in believing,' are thereby rendered gloomy and depressed. In a paper on Miss Martineau's autobiography, contained in Mr. Greg's miscellaneous essays, the striking fact is pointed out that the last twenty-five years of her life, i.e., the period during which she passed from 'positive belief to the positive religion' (i.e., positivism), was comparatively the 'happiest and the most buoyant,' though she suffered

Miss Martineau on the practical results of Scepticism.

¹ See his poems on 'Resignation' and 'A Modern Sappho.'

much in body and mind during this period. In fact, Scepticism might assert with one of its most light-hearted representatives, M. Renan, light- M. Renan. hearted to the last, even in the hour of death: 'I am double; sometimes part of me laughs, while the other cries.' It is to the more cheerful form of Scepticism that we would now draw attention.

(2) The Cheerful Sceptic.

S. Laina.

So far from sharing the gloomy forebodings of some, as to the saddening and subduing effects of Scepticism, Mr. Laing remarks that:

The cheerful doubter.

'Scepticism has been the greatest sweetener of modern life, has not only given us truer and juster views of the realities of the universe, but has made us more liberal-minded, tolerant, merciful, charitable, than in the hard, cruel days of mediæval superstition; and, in a word, that almost in exact proportion as we have drifted away from the latter we have approached nearer to the spirit of true Christianity:'

Scepticism and cheerfulness.

and next, defining more clearly what he means by Mr. S. Laing. Scepticism, i.e., 'disbelief in the inspiration of the Bible and the dogmas of theological Christianity,' he says:

'In this sense I accept it, and proceed to join issue with those who deny my assertion, that the world is a better place to live in on account of scepticism.'1

In A Modern Zoroastrian, our author goes a step further in proposing a substitute for Christianity which would satisfy, as he thinks, the requirements

¹ Problems of the Future, 3rd thousand, pp. 282, 283.

of modern thought. In this volume, as in *Modern Science and Modern Thought*, our ignorance of the ultimate reasons of things is acknowledged, and put forward as a reason for modesty in arriving at conclusions; for 'directly we pass beyond the boundary of such knowledge as really can be known by human faculty, and stand face to face with the Great Unknown, we can only bow our heads with reverence and say with the poet,

'Behold, I know not anything.'1

Then Zoroastrianism is recommended as a system of religious philosophy, on the ground that in its fundamental ideas and essential spirit 'it approximates wonderfully to those of the most advanced modern thought, and gives the outline of a creed which goes further than any other to meet the practical wants of the present day, and to reconcile the conflict between faith and science.' 2 We are told, moreover, that Christianity as it becomes more reasonable approaches this form of religion; and Christians may remain Christians if in Christ they see, as the follower of Zoroaster saw in Ormuzd, nothing beyond 'the personification of the good principle; '3 and if they endeavour, in view of the conflict, or the 'polarity' of the opposite principles of good and evil, to devote themselves

¹ A Modern Zoroastrian, by S. Laing (4th thousand), pp. 126, 127.

² Ibid., 198. ³ Ibid., 181, 182, 204; cf. p. 179, ante.

to the worship and working out of the good; for 'the essence of Christianity' is 'a worship of the good and beautiful, personified in the brightest example which has been afforded—that of Jesus.'1 Here Mr. Laing forgets or makes light of the doctrine of sin and its removal, as taught in the New Testament, whilst he accepts the coeval existence of good and evil as a permanent fact in the order of existence.

But this view of sin does not satisfy the cravings of even such sceptical minds as that of Amiel; 2 Amiel of and therefore those whose minds are cast in a deeper mould are not likely to be satisfied with the doctrines of this 'excellent religion,' which identifies moral and physical evil as natural correlatives and opposites, such as light and darkness, so that there can be no good without corresponding evil.3 'Sin and suffering are facts, as much as virtue and happiness; and if the good half of creation argues for a good Creator, it is an irresistible inference that the bad half argues for one who is evil.' But cheerful acquiescence in this inevitable dualism is irreconcilable with what Matthew Arnold, another distinguished Sceptic,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

^{2 &#}x27; Die unto sin! This great saying of Christianity remains still the highest theoretical solution of the inner life; only in it is there any peace of conscience, and without this peace there is no peace.'-Journal, vol. i. p. 127.

³ Loc. cit. supra, Ibid., pp. 202, 203, 211.

⁴ Problems of the Future, p. 225.

calls the 'secret of Jesus,' which he explains to be the 'death unto sin.' This implies a severe struggle and self-discipline, amounting to a far more serious view of the subject than airily to talk of 'a serene and cheerful faith,' which skips lightly over the most profoundly saddening and solemn problem of moral evil. This form of cheerful Scepticism, as well as the serenity of Miss Martineau and the cheerful philosophy of Renan, would seem, then, to fail here as a 'working hypothesis' so soon as the soul is aroused to its deeper earnestness. 'It cannot reconcile the aspirations of the religious mind with the facts of actual spiritual experience.' This modern Zoroastrianism is apt to lead to a philosophy of life not unlike that of the Persian poet Omar Khayyam, the 'Voltaire of the East,' who thus sings:

'Some look for truth in creeds and rites and rules, Some grope for doubts and dogmas in the schools; But from behind the veil a voice proclaims, Your road lies neither here nor there, O fools!'

(3) Scepticism in Poetry and Fiction.

(a) Poetry.

Poetic views of current Scepticism. In reflective poetry and the 'theological novel,' a product of the present day, we have expressive representations of the religious and moral sentiments and thought in vogue among those readers

¹ Literature and Dogma, p. 200 et seq.

for whom this form of literature has a peculiar attraction. In Lord Tennyson's poetry we possess the musings and reflections of a poetic mind, dwelling on the problems of life and the universe. and the doubts they raise as suggested by the discoveries of science, but couched in poetic form, and representing the Scepticism of the more refined minds brought face to face with the anomalies of physical and moral evil—doubts entertained most reluctantly, not easily allayed or readily shaken off, and yet in the end victoriously repelled. Matthew Arnold, as in his Obermann once more and Dover Beach, mourns over a lost faith. Tennyson, on the other hand, does but express, without endorsing, the Scepticism current among those who have caught the prevailing tone of cultured society. In the following lines of the In Memorian we have the wavering philosophical doubts, characteristic, as we saw, of such thinkers as J. S. Mill:

'They trusted God was Love indeed,
And love Creation's final law—
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against the creed!'

In the same part of the poem occur the well-known lines, of which Mr. Laing tells us that he cannot read them without 'almost a thrill of awe at the intense truthfulness with which they sum up the latest conclusions of the human intellect,' ending with the stanza:

Tennyson and M. Arnold. 'Oh life as futile, then, as frail!

Oh for thy voice to soothe and bless!

What hope of answer or redress?

Behind the Veil, behind the Veil!'

'Here,' comments Mr. Laing, 'at last is the true truth, based on the inexorable facts and laws of modern science, and on the ineradicable hopes, fears, and aspirations of human nature which underlie them in presence of the 'unknowable.' Yet the deceased Laureate looks beyond the present into the future, not with an incredulous smile of indifference, but in reference to the loved and lost he exclaims:

'O thou that after toil and storm

May'st seem to have reached a purer air,

Where faith has centre everywhere,

Nor cares to fix itself to form.'

And again,

'Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.'

He has his misgivings and serious doubts at times:

'I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs,
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.'

But he expresses his own experience further on, showing that while vividly apprehending the doubts and difficulties of serious thinkers in this our age, the poet yet discerns a way through them all to the serene light of faith:

> 'He fought his doubts and gathered strength, He could not make his judgment blind, He faced the spectres of the mind, And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own; And power was with him in the night, Which makes the darkness and the light, And dwells not in the light alone.'

Thus having conquered doubt, hope returns

'With faith that comes of self-control,'

and the poem, so full of doubt and perplexity, closes cheerfully:

> 'For all we thought and loved and did, And hoped and suffered, is but seed Of what in them is flower and fruit;'

and he is peacefully assured that his dead friend lives in God,

> 'That God, which ever lives and loves, One God, one law, one element, And one far-off divine event, To which the whole creation moves.

(b) Fiction.

It is noted by Mr. Laing, as a significant Scepticism in Fiction. symptom of the times, that the well-known novel, Robert Elsmere, is 'a life-history of the conversion of a clergyman of noble nature and cultivated mind, from orthodoxy to a faith which I have to explain in these pages and elsewhere as "Agnostic Christianity," or "Christianity without miracles."

He goes on to give a sketch of the book which, in more definite terms than we could find, sketches its purpose and contents:

Robert Elsmere.

'The gifted authoress describes the progress by which his belief in miracles is gradually undermined; and while his love and admiration for the human Jesus comes out stronger than ever, he feels it impossible to remain in the Church which demands assent to such dogmas as those of the Logos, the Resurrection, and the Atonement. Accordingly, he resigns his living, and devotes himself to a life of active charity in the East-end of London, where he labours to found a new religion which shall satisfy reason by rejecting revelation, while it satisfies emotion by dwelling on the lovely character of the carpenter's son of Nazareth. The hero dies, and the new religion remains a pious aspiration; but it is a sign, continues our author, 'of the altered atmosphere of the times that, instead of being received with a howl of execration, the book is favourably accepted by so many readers as a true picture of the course of modern thought, and as presenting an ideal of what may possibly become the religion of the future. It is a significant symptom of that drift which is setting in from so many lines of thought, irresistible as that of the stars of heaven, away from orthodoxy and towards Agnostic Christianity.'1

Here, then, as Mr. Gladstone in his review of the book puts it, the aim is 'to expel the preternatural element from Christianity, to destroy its dogmatic structure, yet to keep intact the moral and spiritual results.' It is, in short, a substitution of spectral for a living form of Christian faith. It aims to retain the 'enthusiasm of humanity,' without belief in the personal reality of Him who inspired it; it tries to save the spiritual reality

¹ Problems of the Future, pp. 203, 204.

² Nineteenth Century, May, 1888, vol. xxiii., p. 786.

of the New Testament teaching, whilst rejecting the belief in historical Christianity. 'Every human soul,' according to this arbitrary reconstruction of Christianity, 'in which the voice of God makes itself felt, enjoys equally with Jesus of Nazareth the Divine Sonship, and miracles do not happen.' God 'is that force at the root of things which is revealed to us whenever a man helps his neighbour, or a mother denies herself for a child; whenever a soldier dies without a murmur for his country, or a sailor puts out in the darkness to rescue the perishing; whenever a workman throws mind and conscience into his work, or a statesman labours not for his own gain, but for that of the state.' Prayer 'is rather the act of adoration and faith than a prayer properly so-called.' In David Grieve there is a further step from dogmatic to moral Scepticism. Speaking of sin, the hero says, 'We Secularists explain it differently from you. We put a good deal of it down to education, to health, or heredity.' Yet elsewhere he muses thus, without coming to a decided conclusion:

'What if the true key of life lay not in knowledge, but in will; what if knowledge in the true sense was ultimately impossible to man; and if Christianity not only offered, but could give him the one thing truly needful—his own will, regenerate?'

He finds in self-surrender the 'germ of all faith, the essence of all lasting religion;' and then the matter rests in the vagueness of undetermined Scepticism. The dispassionate reader of these two remarkable novels, applying the principle, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' will conclude from the author's own showing that in the sceptical habits of mind that she portrays there is no basis for a sound and strong morality; no warrant for the faith that 'overcomes the world.' Life is vitiated at its very source.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS INQUIRY.

General results.

A few remarks on the general results of our inquiry into various forms of Scepticism thus far described will not be out of place here. Throughout, it would seem, from the profound utterances of Mill, 'the philosopher of men of science,' down to the latest exhibition of sceptical thought, using the novel for its vehicle, the main difficulty, stated in various ways, consists in the insoluble mystery of the universe and the enigmas of life, if the existence of a sentient Creator be postulated, and in the presumed insufficiency of revealed religion to meet it. To Mill himself. nature is an 'illuminated missal,' the characters of which he cannot decipher; to others, it is 'a great perhaps;' and as a practical consequence, in the words of Carlyle, 'There is no religion; there is no God; man has lost his soul.' In such a soul-less universe the idealist and realist alike are staggered by its incomprehensibleness; and in their vain

endeavour to find intellectual repose, they are engulfed in self-torment or self-indulgence, respectively. We venture to suggest that the terrible The sceptical dilemma arises from the attempt to solve what in nature and religion alike is insoluble, and the neglect in religious matters of that principle of inquiry from which alone satisfactory results can be attained. Scientific observers have long ago learned that man is but 'the minister and interpreter of nature'; the 'laws of nature are but generalised facts': when the thinker endeavours to go behind phenomena to the ultimate principles of things, he is at once baffled by insoluble mysteries. But the man of science is wise, and is content to accept the thing that is: why not also the religious inquirer? 1 The materials are before him, in the facts of the spiritual world—the sense of sin, the conscious needs of the soul, the authenticated statements of revelation, the promise of redemption. To neglect these in search of an abstract philosophy, is but another form of the error from which men of science have been long ago delivered: and to reject Christianity because it does not satisfy this demand for an abstract philosophy of religion is to take up a position as irrational as it is hopeless.

There is no such thing to be had as absolute

fallacy.

¹ For a further discussion of this topic see Theology an Inductive Science, by Dr. Angus: Present Day Tract, No. 68.

Sceptical difficulties not peculiar to religion.

and complete knowledge. An independent writer of some authority, in a work on Jesus Christ and Science in the Present Day, says, 'Analytical mechanics, pressure, force, material change, these are insufficient to explain the fact of universal existence. The solution of its enigmas consists in understanding facts, in postulating an infinite Being, existing for and in Himself. The word for the world problem is God.' There are the difficulties of belief in a Creator and Preserver of all mankind. Granted. There is the 'turbid ebb and flow of human misery,' which make it hard to be believed that He is all-powerful and all-good. But are there not corresponding difficulties of scientific belief? Are there not the 'doctrines of science,' subject to sceptical criticism in the same manner as are some Christian dogmas? Is it so easy to believe in Mr. H. Spencer's 'naturallyrevealed end, towards which the Power manifested throughout evolution works'? Is belief in the Absolute any easier than belief in the personal God? Yet we are told, on the authority of Mr. Spencer, 'that its positive existence is a necessary datum of consciousness,' and that the belief which this datum of consciousness 'constitutes, has a higher warrant than any other whatever.' Mere

¹ Jesus Christus und die Wissenschaft der Gegenwart; von Moritz Carriere, p. 31; and cf. ib., pp. 25, 26. The author's position as Professor of Æsthetics is not dissimilar to that occupied by Mr. Ruskin in this country.

ability no

ground for disbelief.

inconceivability is no sufficient ground for dis- Inconceivbelief. If 'the scientific method,' as applied to the natural world, is baffled in the attempts of men of science to understand its deeper secrets, a fact fully acknowledged by such men as Du Bois-Reymond in his two lectures on 'The Limits of Natural Science' and 'The Seven World Problems.' is it likely that such and similar methods applied to the supernatural will be more successful? 'The invisible things' of the creation are 'clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made' (Rom. i. 20), but only so by the eye of faith, which is 'the evidence of things not seen' (Heb. xi. 1). Beyond this it is futile to argue. Time, space, matter, motion, force, form, are all factors in the conceptions we form of external things; the nature and meaning of which are matters of doubt and debate. The very existence of the visible universe is an open question; yet without postulating it in some way, no scientific system can be framed. But 'where proof is necessary, Mr. A. J. Scepticism is possible.' And, as the author of this sentence attempts to show, no philosophy has been able to give a rational proof of the axioms on which science is based, e.g., the principles of causation, uniformity of nature, etc. The whole system of the universe rests upon assumptions, and

Balfour on Philosophic

Doubt.

A Defence of Philosophic Doubt, being an Essay on the Foundation of Belief, by Arthur James Balfour, M.A., M.P., p. 84; cf. ib., pp. 36, 42, 68, 71, 146.

therefore affords no ground for an attack upon religion, as being incapable of proof according to the scientific method.

'The broad fact remains,' he says, 'that the world as represented to us by science can no more be perceived or imagined than the Deity as represented to us by Theology; and that in the first one, as in the second, we must content ourselves with symbolical images, of which the thing we can most certainly say is that they are not only inadequate but incorrect.' ¹

Faith underlies the conclusions of science.

In short, 'science is a system of belief, which, for anything we allege to the contrary, is wholly without proof,' and 'religion is, at any rate, no worse off than science in the matter of proof.'2 But is the man of science to give up all belief in his scientific doctrines founded on experience, because he cannot arrive at complete certitude? There is room for philosophic doubt, as there is room for religious uncertainty. To some extent it is true of both, 'who never doubted, never half believed.' But as there are limits to scientific doubt, where definite knowledge for the time being is impossible, by the introduction of 'reasonable belief' in experience; so the same rule must be applied to matters of spiritual experience, and to Christianity as an experimental system of religion now before the world for nearly two thousand

¹ Ibid., p. 245. Elsewhere he says:—'The only beliefs of which, according to received scientific theories, we may say with certainty that they can have no reason, but must have non-rational causes, are those in which the certitude of all other beliefs finally rests,' p. 264; cf. ib., p. 269.

² Ibid., pp. 287, 293 et seq., 319-321.

years. It may be impossible to explain the phenomena of human life; and this may be an excuse for suspense of judgment and hesitation in speaking dogmatically on the attributes of the Lord of life, but it is no excuse for denying His existence, or asserting the limitation of His power. Indefinite knowledge should incline us to believe 'that God is'; absolute ignorance has no right either to affirm or deny anything absolutely. But by modest and earnest inquiry the indefinite may become definite, and ignorance be displaced by partial knowledge; and so the truth may be approached by slow degrees: 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.'

Mr. J. Morley, in his work on Compromise, distinguishes wise suspense in forming opinions, from 'avowed disingenuousness and self-illusion;' wise reserve in expressing them, from 'voluntary decision;' and wise tardiness in trying to realise them, from 'indolence and pusillanimity.' We admit the legitimacy of doubt, if it be this wise suspense, reserve, and tardiness in coming to conclusions: 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' But we also repudiate indolence and indecision from want of moral courage and earnestness in such a matter of the highest importance; 'it is one thing to suggest doubt, another to establish Scepticism.' As in every branch of physical science, so in the 'science of sciences'; as in the natural so in the

Mr.
J. Morley
on the
formation
and
expression
of opinion

spiritual world, there are some things that pass man's understanding, where there is room left for the exercise of faith, and during the suspense of uncertainty the claims of faith should not be disregarded. They are fully admitted in the establishment of scientific doctrines; on what ground are they disallowed in the establishment of Christian doctrine? Creeds are nothing else but an attempt to attain to greater definiteness in matters of belief, where mental grasp power of verbal expression scarcely suffice. one form or other, convictions and beliefs,' says a very friendly exponent of Scepticism, 'determinate conclusions of various kinds, are inseparable from human thought and research, and are inevitable to the individual thinker, as well as to the community of which he forms a part.'1

They are found necessary in every theory of science before it is fully verified; but pending this, the necessity of verification is no argument against its veracity. The only alternative in both cases is either to accept the testimony of facts for what cannot be proved absolutely, or to sink into unmitigated Pyrrhonism, that is, the negation of all knowledge, or universal Scepticism, which puts a lock to the secret of the universe, and throws the key into the

¹ Free Learning and Free Teaching in Theology, an address in the Manchester New College at Oxford, Oct. 20th, 1891, by Rev. John Owen, B.D., author of Evenings with the Sceptics, p. 6.

sea of doubt; it amounts to a belief in nothing, or intellectual nihilism. As Hallam, speaking of Montaigne, justly remarks: 'It may be deemed a symptom of wanting a thorough love of truth when a man overrates, as much as when he underrates. the difficulties he deals with. Montaigne is, perhaps, not exempt from this failing;' and hence the various writers in the next age, like Pascal, as Hallam points out, 'considered him, not perhaps unjustly, as an enemy to the candid and honest investigation of truth, both by his sceptical bias and by the great indifference of his temperament.' 1 Some of our modern Sceptics are apt to follow in this the parent of modern Scepticism in Europe. Mr. A. J. Harrison, in his work on Problems of Christianity and Scepticism, in which he gives some of his experiences as 'evidential missioner,' relates that one of his opponents said to him: 'Had not Christopher Columbus doubted the ancient charts. he would never have discovered America.' The lecturer appositely replied: 'If Christopher Columbus had done nothing but doubt, he would never have crossed the seas in quest of the western world.' The incident illustrates a truth which cannot be too carefully borne in mind, that character and action are determined not by what a man denies or doubts, but by what he believes. Mere negation is powerless. It is from faith that all strength

Montaigne the parent of modern European Scepticism.

Faith, not doubt, the source of strength.

¹ Literary History, vol. ii., p. 127 (7th Edition). ² p. 143.

and nobleness spring. Let faith have but an assured and reasonable basis, and it may be trusted as the guide of life. May we not see this exemplified in the influence of such men as Luther, Cromwell, Bacon, Newton, Faraday, men who have been some of the greatest benefactors of the human race, and have all been men of faith?

CHRISTIAN SCEPTICISM.

Scepticism overcome.

Much may be learned as to the wisest and most effectual methods of meeting Scepticism from the mental history of those believers, or of persons well disposed to Christianity, in whom sceptical tendencies have at times seemed to prevail. Many such have had their struggles with occasional doubts or difficulties of belief, which, with varied degrees of success, they have overcome at last.

The Apostle Thomas is held up by some as the type of sceptical criticism demanding irrefragable proof in matters of fact, in whom the passive melancholy mood of unbelief rises into passionate vehemence, and the surging waves of doubt dash violently against the Rock of ages. 'Except I shall see . . . I will not believe.' But in the case of St. Thomas, the rush of resurging faith swept doubt away when he said, 'My Lord and my God.' In the cry of the would-be disciple—'Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief!' 2

¹ John xx. 25.

² Mark ix. 24.

-we have an instance of imperfect faith mixed with a residuum of incredulity, for which the prayer for Divine aid is the most potent remedy; and, to mention one more instance, in the prayer of the disciples, 'Lord, increase our faith,' we may discern a latent tendency to Scepticism, even in believers, which is repressed or subdued by the yearning after a greater fulness and completeness of faith. It is a Christian aspiration rather than the formal expression of lingering doubt. Scepticism, too, may be traced in connection with a higher Christian culture in the occasional returns to a questioning frame of mind on the part of thinking Christians, brought face to face with, and perhaps influenced by, the Scepticism outside the pale of the Church.

Under this head are comprehended,2 on the Abelard and negative side the speculative Scepticism of Abe- Aquinas. lard, which has been called the 'rationalism of the dark ages,' because to him reason is the formal principle of faith; and on the positive side the laborious attempts of Thomas Aquinas to adjust faith to science, as then understood, and to impart scientific definition and system to the doctrines of the Church. But in both instances the so-called Scepticism was nothing else but an attempt to justify the truth of Christianity on rational grounds. Abelard's doubt was avowedly but

¹ Tarke xvii. 5.

² For the reasons of this see again Hallam, loc. cit., i. p. 141, 142.

inquiry, independent of Church authority, as the first step to faith—the criticism which precedes the constructive process.1 Aquinas throughout was simply engaged in re-affirming and re-establishing the truths of Christianity at an important crisis in the history of religion and of thought, when the introduction of new ideas produced new forms of doubt. So, again, in the Thoughts of Pascal, there are to be found phrases and expressions which are constantly quoted as in the nature of religious, sometimes unconscious, Scepticism-some bearing reference to the criterion of knowledge, others affecting the truths of Christianity; but if it be true, as we are told, that in 'the very vehemence of his assertion he shows he is endeavouring to cry down a rising doubt,' it is equally true that he rises completely above the doubts which trouble him. Thus, in the following passage, we have the pathetic yearnings of a Christian, strangely resembling those doubts to which we have alluded in other and less religious sceptics. Speaking of nature as 'an infinite sphere, whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere,' he says:

'I look on all sides, and see nothing but obscurity; nature offers me nothing but matter for doubt and disquiet. Did I see nothing there which marked a divinity, I should decide not to believe in him. Did I see everywhere the marks of a

Creator, I should rest peacefully in faith. But seeing too

Pascal.

¹ See A Critical History of Free Thought in reference to the Christian Religion, by A. S. Farrar (being the 'Bampton Lectures' for 1862), p. 118.

much to deny, and too little to affirm, my state is pitiful. My heart is wholly bent to know where is the true good in order to follow it, nothing would seem to me too costly for eternity' (*Pensées*, 2nd Part, art. vii.).

Yet nothing can be more complete than his final conviction in truth concerning God, revealed in Scripture. Again he says:

'Such is the natural state of diseased humanity, that it believes in the portion of truth directly, and hence the disposition to deny all that seems incomprehensible; whereas in fact he knows only in his natural condition what is untrue, and that he has no right to accept as true anything unless its contradictory appears to him untrue' (Pensées, 1st Part, art. ii.).

Yet, at the same time, he points to the heart as the avenue of truth into the head, and adopts the maxim of saintly persons, who say:

'In speaking of divine things, that one must love them in order to know them, and that we approach truth through charity' (1st Part, art. iii.);

and so he succeeds in allaying intellectual doubt.

He, too, clearly notes the discrepancy between the knowable and unknowable: as a distinguished mathematician and man of science, he clearly perceives and with profound regret dwells upon those cosmological riddles which defy solution by natural reason, and doubts which is preferable as the lesser evil of these two—to err in matters of this kind, or to indulge a profitless curiosity. Pride of intellect may produce the former, intellectual indolence the latter; the former produces the stoical Scepticism of Epictetus, the latter the

epicurean Scepticism of Montaigne. But for himself. Pascal as a Christian thinker accepts what he cannot prove, and humbly acquiesces in what he cannot understand until further light shall be vouchsafed; faith comes in where knowledge fails. And so, in this deep thinker, we have a typical and comparatively modern instance of Christian doubt, as a transient mode of thought, to be carefully distinguished from un-Christian or anti-Christian Scepticism. In the former, the predominant feeling is a readiness to accept the revealed truth, because of the acknowledged imperfection of human nature in arriving at it unaided; and also a readiness to wait till further proof be forthcoming, when the evidence seems to be insufficient, or knowledge inadequate. In the latter there is an antecedent proneness to distrust traditional beliefs as such, to withhold credence from them unduly, whilst overrating the acquisition of positive knowledge admitting of full proof - a tendency of mind which, though it cannot help acknowledging the limits of knowledge, inclines towards unbelief or unwillingness to receive anything which transcends the natural power of arriving at scientific truth, and in so doing positively denies existence to the higher faculty of spiritual perception, which is faith.

Relative Results of Scepticism and Christianity.

We now proceed to consider what are likely to

be the consequences of Scepticism if persisted in, compared with the effects likely to flow from an unhesitating acceptance of Christianity, on ethics, intellectual progress, and the practical life of man; in other words, which of the two, as modes of religious thought, may claim supremacy in satisfying the demands of the heart and the intellect in serving as guides in life; and this on the principle which should lie at the root of true Scepticism and true Religion alike, the Christian rule to 'prove all things, hold fast that which is good' (1 Thess. v. 21).

(a) Ethical Effects of Scepticism and Christianity respectively.

Mr. Laing, in the following narrative related by George Eliot. an intimate friend and admirer of George Eliot, tries to show how Scepticism, so far from weakening, really strengthens the sense of duty; from which he infers that morality would gain, rather than lose, by its alliance with doubt.

'I remember how at Cambridge I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity, on an evening of rainy May; and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-calls of men—the words God, Immortality, Duty - pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third. Never, perhaps, had sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensing law. I listened, and night fell; her grave and majestic countenance turned towards me like a Sybil's in the gloom; it was as though she withdrew from my grasp one by one the two scrolls of promise, and left me the third scroll only, awful with inevitable fates.'

The picturesqueness and solemnity of this reminiscence somewhat blinds the reader to the unsubstantial character of the reasoning. It is, in fact, the impressive statement of an opinion, not reasoning at all. That a certain thinker finds God inconceivable and immortality incredible proves nothing, in the face of the weighty reasonings by which deeper thinkers affirm both to be realities; while to assert the paramount claims of duty, in the absence of the motives and encouragements which general human experience has hitherto found needful to the formation of the highest character, seems perilously like building on a cloud. The records of biography, not excluding that of George Eliot herself, will enable the reader to test the value of a morality reared on such a basis.

Mr. S. Laing on Scepticism and Morality. In his work on the *Problems of the Future*, Mr. Laing further remarks, 'that it may be truly said in a great many cases that, as individuals and nations become more sceptical, they become more moral.' As for the substitutes for the religious impulse, he says again: 'As old dogmatic religions fail to supply the spiritual stimulus, it is the more necessary to find it in the wonders of the universe, the beauties of nature, and in communion with great minds through music, painting, and books.' He goes on to show how the means

¹ Modern Science and Modern Thought, p. 218; Problems of the Future, pp. 206, 207; ibid., 211.

² Ibid., p. 221.

of general culture are more and more brought within the reach of the masses. But, we may inquire, for how many among these have the marvels of nature, art and literature any attraction? It is only an infinitesimal proportion of men in all classes over whom they exercise a moralising influence. To take a historical instance in point. Florence, in the fifteenth century, was the most renowned city in Europe for intellectual refinement, the centre of humanistic culture; but, says Professor Villari in his life of Savonarola, 'Artists, Tested by the history men of letters, statesmen, nobles, and people, were of morals in all equally corrupt in mind, devoid of public and private virtue, devoid of all moral sense.' They were not earnest even, he adds, in Scepticism. Such were the effects of the Renaissance. The national revival in France produced results of the same kind, from a wide-spreading Scepticism in the eighteenth century; whilst the growing acceptance of a non-moral literature in that country betokens a decadence in morals as the result of sceptical thought; whether it clothe itself in the 'creed of despondency,' such as that of Pierre Loti or in M. Renan's sceptical gaiety. In either case, the combination of modern paganism and modern science is apparently producing a culture of high intellectual refinement; but only touching 'the sensuous surface of things,' it scarcely goes deep enough to stir up the heart

to a deeper sense of stern and inflexible duty. If it be said that this applies to people of the Latin race only, inclined constitutionally to laxity of morals, we may take Goethe's Faust, the incarnation of Germanic doubt, and note its effect on one, French by descent, by birth a citizen of Geneva, and by education German—for he is saturated with the philosophical idealism imbibed at German universities; one, too, who has been always regarded as a typical Sceptic of the day. Amiel writes under date of July 16th, 1859, in his Journal Intime:

And by the results of German culture: Faust.

'I have just read Faust again. Alas, every year I am fascinated afresh by this sombre figure, this restless life. It is the type of suffering towards which I myself gravitate. and I am always finding in the poem words which strike straight to my heart. Immortal, malign, accursed type! Spectre of my own conscience, ghost of my own torment, image of the ceaseless struggle of the soul which has not vet found its true aliment, its peace, its faith,-art thou not the typical example of a life which feeds upon itself, because it has not found its God, and which in its wandering flight across the wilds carries within it, like a comet, an inextinguishable flame of desire and the agony of incurable disillusion? I am also reduced to nothingness, I shiver on the brink of the great empty abysses of my inner being, stifled by the longing for the unknown, consumed with the thirst for the infinite, prostrate before the ineffable. I am torn sometimes by this blind passion for life, these desperate struggles for happiness, though more often I am a prey to complete exhaustion and taciturn despair-what is the reason of it all? Doubt-doubt of oneself, of thought, of men, of life-doubt which enervates the will and weakens all our powers, which makes us forget God and neglect prayer and duty-that restless and corrosive doubt which makes existence impossible, and meets all hopes with satire.'1

¹ Amiel's Journal, translated with Introduction and Notes by Mrs. Humphry Ward, vol. i., pp. 125, 126.

Or to come nearer home. 'The truly virtuous Virtue on a man,' says Mr. L. Stephen, in his Science of Ethics basis. (p. 385), 'is the typical man, whose character conforms to the conditions of social vitality.' how many people, even if fairly acquainted with the results of social science, are likely to become moral scientifically, conforming to 'the type defined by the healthy condition of the social organism'? But, says another pronounced Sceptic, Professor Leslie Stephen; Karl Pearson, in the Ethic of Free Thought, 'The ignorant cannot be moral' (p. 123); and again, 'Study and knowledge alone absolve from sin; morality is impossible to the ignorant' (p. 124). That is, there is no gospel for the mass of mankind; nothing to move them to the highest morality. A system which leads to such results stands surely self-condemned.

Karl Pearson: the author of Ecce Homo.

It is a remarkable fact, in connection with this subject, that nearly every writer of recent times, even among those most hostile to Christianity, admits or asserts directly or indirectly its importance as a basis of ethics for the average man.

' May we not hope to see a religion arise,' says the author of Natural Religion, 'which shall appeal to the sense of duty as forcibly, preach righteousness and truth, justice and mercy as solemnly and exclusively as Christianity itself does, only so as not to shock modern views of the universe?' (p. 157).

Thus, after all, he falls back upon Christianity as the 'religion of ideal humanity,' but, divested of its miraculous elements, what he calls 'natural Christianity' (pp. 157, 179, and cf. 192). Christianity, Admission of the Sceptical school. bereft of its essentials, is to regenerate mankind! Strangest of all chimeras; most delusive of hopes!

Mr. Cotter Morison, in his work already referred to, whilst underrating the ethical power of Christianity, is nevertheless compelled to admit on the one hand that 'it has surpassed all other religions in its power of keeping up with human evolution:' and also is bound to confess on the other, that 'the scientific cultivation of human nature,' and the moral training in accordance with it, 'will never turn the bad into good, the evil constitution or character into the vigorous and moral' (p. 291). All moral conduct, according to Strauss, amounts to a self-determination of the individual, corresponding to the idea of the human race; but, says the author of the Creed of Science, 'our practical working ethics, as distinct from the ethics of the schools, often grand enough, is narrowed to the lowest egoism and the coarsest moral materialism;' and here he speaks of the most advanced race in Europe, and therefore were it not better, then, for the revolutionist to try first to act on the thought, the conscience, and the heart, to preach the moral revolution before the crusade against property, to try to induce men to care less about property, to arouse feelings of love in them for each other, as the Founder of Christianity, also aiming at a social revolution, did?' 1

¹ The Social Problem in its Economical, Moral, and Political Aspects, by Wm. Graham, pp. 417 and 457.

To the testimony of these representatives of philosophic and scientific doubt, we may add that of Goethe, in whom literary and scientific culture alike reached their highest eminence, when he says:1

Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences progress in even greater extent and depth, and the human mind widen itself as much as it desires, beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity, as it shines in the Gospels, it will not go.'

(b) The respective Effect of Scepticism and Christianity on Intellectual Progress.

It is the boast of Scepticism that it has been all Scepticism along the harbinger of truth in dispersing the mists of error, and uprooting the false pretences of authoritative teaching, and thus promoting 'progress by antagonism.' 'Until doubt began,' says Mr. Buckle, 'progress was impossible.'2 How far is this true? that is, as regards modern Scepticism, with which alone we are here concerned. The scepticism of the present day, as we have seen, in its ultimate bearing tends either to 'intellectual despair,' or an easy acquiescence in ignorance. But neither of them will advance us on the way to more complete knowledge; they leave the inquiring mind in impenetrable gloom. It is Mr. L. Stephen, not likely to err in pronouncing a hasty judgment on such a point, who says, speaking of Bolingbroke

and culture.

doubt on

¹ Conversations with Eckermann, p. 568.

² History of Civilization, vol. i., p. 335.

as the representative of sceptical Theism in the last century, that in spite of his optimism, like the other freethinkers of the time, he is a disbeliever in progress. So, too, he speaks of Hume, 'whose cynical conservatism inclines to the side of authority as the most favourable to that stagnation which is the natural ideal of a Sceptic.' 1

Disbelief in Providence leads to fatalism.

Strauss, whilst admitting the intellectual loss we incur by a disbelief in Providence, considers that we are amply compensated by a belief in the necessary laws of the universe, which he explains to mean 'the interlinking chain of causes in the world, which is reason.' But when all the links of the chain are caused by necessity, Epicurean fatalism or Stoic ataraxia becomes the only philosophy of life; a belief in determinism which impedes freedom of action; for without liberty there can be no progress. Mr. Laing himself notes this difficulty. In the volume where he celebrates the triumphs of modern science and the decay of old beliefs, he frankly adopts 'the scientific idea of a First Cause, inscrutable, and past finding out; ' 'but,' he adds:

'This is a more sublime as well as a more rational belief than the old orthodox conception; but there is no doubt that it requires more strength of mind to embrace it, and it appears cold and cheerless to those who have been accustomed to see special providences in every occurrence, and to fancy them-

¹ History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, vol i. p. 180; vol. ii., p. 185 (the italics are our own).

selves the special object of supernatural disposition in all the details of daily life. Hopes and fancies, however, are powerless against facts; and the world is as surely passing from the phase of orthodox into that of scientific belief, as youth is passing into manhood, and the planet which we inhabit from the fluid and fiery state into that of temperate heat, progressive cooling, and final extinction as the abode of life. In the meantime, what can we do but possess our souls in patience, follow truth wherever it leads us, and trust, as Tennyson advises, that in the long run everything will be for the best, and "every winter turn to spring?" '1

But the cold winter of death in our extinct world of the future has no spring. Is the scientific apprehension of this fact the cause why the poet here quoted says that 'Progress halts with lamed foot?' 'Progress, not happiness, is the law of the world,' says Mr. Laing; and this is the truth we must be prepared to act upon at all hazards and at all sacrifices, if we wish to retain that civilization unimpaired and to extend it farther.² But how far and to what purpose, however far, in a world doomed to death within measurable distance? Will mortals without hope in a life beyond this be helped or hindered by such a belief in the futility of their effort to promote the progress of the race? May not Scepticism be called therefore, as Lord Lindsay in a volume so entitled calls it, 'A retrogressive movement in theology and philosophy?' Mr. John Beattie Crozier, in his book on Civilization and Progress, speaks from the sceptical standpoint hopefully of the functions of science in

¹ Modern Science and Modern Thought, p. 222. ² Ibid., p. 104.

A winter without a spring. impelling progress; yet, not satisfied with 'the assurance that the great web of laws which makes up the material and the moral world shall work upwards to divine and diviner issues' (p. 269); he adds that we have 'no security for future advance in the scale of being, except on one condition, and that is that we underpin the law of evolution with religion,' and even acknowledges that

'Christianity, by giving free expansion to the mind, heart, and imagination, was in its first essence favourable to an advance in civilization' (p. 444).

Has the salt lost its savour? There is nothing to prove that Christianity has lost this power. On the contrary, the most Christian are still also the most advanced nations in the world.

(c) Scepticism and Christianity in their Relative Effects on Practical Life.

Scepticism in its practical effect. In the next place we have to consider the results of Scepticism on practice, in everyday life concerns, and the promotion or otherwise of material prosperity, as the basis of a higher life; in short, how it works as a mode of action as compared with Christianity. The system most calculated to make men happy does not, in the opinion of Mr. Leslie Stephen, from whom we have quoted more than once, depend on the faith it can inspire, but on its power of facing facts,—the system 'which forces them to live in a bracing atmosphere; which fits them to look facts in the

face, and to suppress vain repining by strenuous action instead of luxurious dreaming.'1 But the faith here brought into juxtaposition with fact is hastily assumed to be a faith in unrealities. Of such faith, says one of the most eloquent defenders of the faith,2

'Faith grows bloated and sickly when it has to feed on fictions; it thrives solely on truth.'

Christian faith in the Fatherhood of God, the Faith in its divine character and redemptive work of the 'Author of our faith,' and the guiding and inspiring influences of the Spirit of holiness, faith in the actuality of that inner life of the soul directed by a higher hand, of

'A silent soul, led by a silent God to sightless things, led sightless.'

is an experience as real as that of any of those mental impressions and conceptions on which all knowledge is based. It is, moreover, a fact that the intuitions of the Christian faith have at all times been able to brace up man to high effort and endurance in the devious paths of life; whereas distrust, or no trust, in a higher power is apt to produce that inner Scepticism which is selfdistrust paralyzing action.3 'Scepticism,' says Amiel,4 'is the wiser course; but in delivering us from error it tends to paralyze life.' Besides,

¹ Essays on Free Thinking and Plain Speaking. p. 360.

² The Victory of Faith, by Archdeacon Hare, p. 165 (2nd Ed).

³ See Spectator, 1892, p. 715. ⁴ Vol. ii., loc. cit., p. 167.

when faith in the eternal verities is uncertain, practice becomes wavering. Speaking of the 'characteristics' of the age so far back as 1831, and of the perplexing effects of 'Sceptical inquiry,' Carlyle remarks, 'In this time, as in all times, it must be the heaviest evil for him (i.e. the man of doubt) if his faculty of action lie dormant, and only that of sceptical inquiry exert itself,' evidently indicating the close connection between these two; whilst in a fine passage, too long to quote here, he eulogises faith thus:

'Faith strengthens us, enlightens us, for all endeavours and endurances; with faith we can do all, and dare all, and life itself has a thousand times been joyfully given away. But the sum of man's misery is ever this, that he feels himself crushed under the Juggernaut wheels, and knows that Juggernaut is no divinity, but a dead mechanical idol.'

The effects of faith on practical philanthropy.

If we inquire how far social amelioration and practical philanthropy have profited by faith in the possibilities of human improvement flowing from faith in the divine government, and the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, there can scarcely be a doubt as to the superior power of faith over doubt. An organ of social democracy speaks of the 'blessedness of unbelief,' which enables the social reformer, unhampered by spiritual misgivings, and false hopes of future blessedness in another world, to attend to the purely material interests of life in this. Accordingly we find that the only religious festival recognised by social

democrats is the 18th of March, devoted to the celebration of several social and political subversals in the ancient and modern world. It suggests naturally a belief only in the mechanical rearrangements of society by force, belief in a 'persistence Futility of Scepticism of force' which shapes society and imparts momentum to social movements. But when has belief in such unknown force sustained man in the 'turbid torrent of doubt and despair'? The laws of motion and matter applied to man have not wrought always in the direction of social happiness. In the examination of social Utopias, old and new, the present writer has noticed with regret the gradual dying out of ideals; idealism being replaced as we approach the later developments by a mean, matter-of-fact, self-seeking, scheming materialism. With the death of a belief in higher ideals, destructive passion, as a motive force, takes the place of constructive enthusiasm; when the moral sense is identical with 'instincts,' and no longer founded on a religious sense of duty, these human instincts, as late experience has shown, scarcely tend to the safety of society as a whole. Even in such noble-minded and unselfish men as J. S. Mill, unfaith unnerves them for such efforts J. S. Mill of social amelioration. He distinctly tells us in his Autobiography that when he put to himself the question, 'Suppose that all our objects in life were realised; that all the changes in institutions

regenerative

and opinions, which you were looking forward to, could be completely effected in this very instant, would this be a great joy and happiness to you?' The answer was 'No!' And 'I felt that, unless I could see some better hope than this for human happiness in general, my dejection must continue.' Here we see clearly the depressing effects of Scepticism in an ideally disposed nature. Others more cynically inclined may well ask, 'Why labour for a race which is continually in a state of flux, one generation of fools and greedy cowards giving place to another generation of the same?'

Does it matter how many they saved? We are all of us wrecked at last.

Generally speaking, then, the sense of weakness and self-distrust which results from loss of faith or the conscious and complete absence of the faculty of belief, in some natures amounts to so much loss of inner force propelling man to outward action. In exceptional instances, as in Mill and George Eliot, sympathy and pity for the race, with a high sense of duty acquired, as in the case of the latter, whilst still under the influence of evangelical faith, may become the inspirer of noble thoughts and the prompter of noble efforts, even under a deep sense of dejection which comes of Scepticism. But compare with these the ideal hero of faith according to the Scriptures, as presented in the biography of Abraham, the father of the faith-

Exceptional instances: how accounted for?

Contrast with the character of Abraham.

ful; 'not staggered in faith,' but 'hoping against hope,' in his mission of life becoming the parent of untold blessings to future generations; and see in this the fructifying effects of a living faith in stimulating activity, dictating self-extinction; and then think of the incalculable effects of such a beneficial career inspired by faith in its practical effect on others in the most distant future. There is another figure standing out boldly on the page of history of one of the same nation, with its 'genius for religion,' equally pre-eminent by the gift of faith, whose work even from a sceptical point of view was thereby rendered a complete success, if practical success be the accomplishment of the thing aimed at. St. Paul was a truly successful man in The Apostle Paul. his own sphere, both as regards his own personal attainments and in his apostolic office; and this is the result of his spiritual experience, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith,' etc. (2 Tim. iv. 7). And again, 'I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all' (Phil. ii. 17). Can there be any doubt that in such faith we have the secret of success in every career of life?

DUTY OF THE SCEPTIC AT LEAST TO SUSPEND THE VERDICT AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

From what has been said there is, then, a strong Practical inferences, presumption in favour of belief in Christianity

as the only known motive power which brings the influences of Faith to bear upon Conduct. And if so, is it not an act most unjustifiable and reprehensible, considering the issue at stake and the possible consequences to a vast number of people whose faith is easily shaken or disturbed by reason of their ignorance, and all but complete want of scientific training, to pronounce a hasty verdict on the inefficiency and inefficacy of Christianity in the present day; specially as similar pronouncements in the past have been falsified by subsequent experience? Is it not the duty of earnest truth-seekers, as undoubtedly many modern sceptics are, with a due regard to intellectual integrity, to suspend judgment until further consideration is given to so weighty a subject? When many on all sides are distracted by the clash of claims of rival systems seriously engaged in trying to find out the whole truth, and if possible to find a substitute for discarded Christianity, is it not the solemn duty of the truth-seeker to pause and inquire whether the secret of all goodness, nobleness, and power in life is not, after all, close at hand? Whether, in fact, it may not be found in Him who proclaimed Himself as 'the Truth,' and who offers to those who will accept Him as their Saviour a rest and a peace from the troubles of conscience and heart?

SUPERIOR CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY OVER SCEPTICISM.

The choice before such an one now lies between The only Christian theism and a vague theistic mysticism; between Christianity as the religion of passive resignation and cheerful acquiescence, and agnostic Stoicism or Epicurean Quietism; between Christian spiritual-mindedness pervading all human activities, and an active and aggressive materialistic spiritualism or 'Spiritualistic Realism.' Which of these substitutes appeals most powerfully to the wants of our inner nature? which is likely to prove most effective in the life of the average man in modern society? For after all, it is the average man who has to be roused and raised. A system, as we have already shown, which only appeals to the cultured few is impotent in dealing with the mass. To the majority of mankind such a conception as 'the Eternal not ourselves' is a poor substitute for a belief in 'God the Father Almighty.' As an object of trust in a higher power, it is a mere formula ill-understood; and such, too, is the idea of 'a stream of tendency making for good,' or God regarded in the light of a moral force, or impersonal Deity identified with moral law.

choice.

A religion needed for the average

'I say that man believes in a God who feels himself in the presence of a power which is not himself, and is immeasurably above himself, a power in the contemplation of which he finds safety and happiness,'

says the author of Natural Religion (p. 19), and then adds further on:

'The average scientific man worships just at present a more awful, and, as it were, a greater deity than the average Christian.'

What that amounts to we have already seen in the creed of Mr. Laing; from it we may infer what comfort it would give to the average unscientific man, woman, or child. By Mr. Laing's own confession, as well as that of Mr. Greg, the scientific method fails in the attempt of solving the deepest problems of existence. All that the 'creed of science' can do, according to the declaration of its own exponent, is to inculcate a serene resignation to the perturbed spirit and acquiescence in 'the final insoluble mystery of the universe.'

'The religious sentiment of resignation to the evil, and gratitude for the good, and of complete final dependence upon a law-governed cosmos is thus naturally produced in us.'

Contrasts of belief.

But how can this belief in cosmos as a spiritual possession and weapon in dark and evil days bear comparison as an inducement to resignation, with a belief in the Fatherhood of God, whose external mind is reflected in the order of the Universe and the redemptive work of Christ? Again, it may be asked, which is likely to prove the most powerful, as a propelling or sustaining force in the conduct of life, giving the highest degree of moral

¹ The Creed of Science: Religious, Moral, and Social, by William Graham (2nd Edition), p. 228 and ante.

impetus-the fervour of religious idealism, centered in the person of Christ, or the tepid impartial realism of a scientific belief in the laws of nature? Christianity has proved its superiority over Stoicism as an attempt 'to follow nature' in this respect.

From what has been said, it is plain that as a Scepticism substitute for religion, or as a religion of thought, Scepticism must ever be unsatisfactory. Its search after truth does not lead to conviction: by its own confession the 'Evolution of Belief' is nought but a gradual evaporation of all creeds in self-sufficing nescience. But conduct detached from belief is vacillating, feeble, ineffective; and, therefore, unbelief must ever exercise a deteriorating influence on will force, whether in the individual or society.

fails to produce convictions that dominate the life.

'To act, we must believe; to believe, we must make up our minds, affirm, decide.'-Amiel, vol. i., p. 158.

But decision and active self-determination are paralysed by a sceptical state of mind.

When the mind is baffled in the presence of cosmological mystery, and tortured by doubt in the moral government of God, the feelings and the will cannot but be enfeebled, in the words of Emerson-

'The one serious and formidable thing in nature is a will. Society is servile from want of will, and therefore the world wants saviours and religions.'

Christianity puts will and submission to the higher will first, and wisdom next. 'He that willeth to do His will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God' (John vii. 17). 'He that doeth the truth cometh to the light' (iii. 21).

True, the typical Sceptic of the present day may be a more conscientious lover of truth and goodness than the loud professor of an empty creed, whose deeds repel us, the more so because they happen to be inconsistent with his profession of belief. But this is true only of exceptional natures. the large majority of mankind the disavowal of time-honoured truth and religion as a rule of life would mean utter moral disintegration. Even among cultured sceptics this inherent weakness of Scepticism, and the corresponding inherent power of Christianity in the opposite direction, has led to attempts of modern sceptics to associate themselves into a kind of new Church, which has been not inaptly termed The Church for Vague Christians. Thus we see those who dismiss the intuitions of faith beginning with an excessive demand for certitude, and ending by giving expression in vague and faltering tones to the tenets of their own makeshifts of belief, which, as has been observed, amount to an attempt to construct faith on the airy basis of arbitrary selections from the accounts we possess of Christ's life and teaching. As a spiritual phenomenon

Scepticism tends to moral disintegration.

Weakness of Scepticism and strength of Faith

¹ See on this New Forms of Christian Education, an address to the University Hall Guild (1892), by Mrs. Humphry Ward, one of the most conspicuous members of this association.

the contrast between the weakness of scepticism and the strength of such heroes of the faith as are named in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and which is in a measure exemplified in some Christians of modern times, ought to arrest the attention of the scientific age. Even if only as a phenomenon requiring explanation, the 'force of Truth,' in those who believe in Christianity, should not, at least, be overlooked as the spiritual force in an age which idolises force in all its forms.

FUTURE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity in the present day is disregarded to signs of some extent, and its truth obscured during the favour of momentary prevalence of Scepticism. But signs are not wanting of a reaction in favour of positive beliefs after this temporary eclipse of faith. In the progress of discussion raised by such doubts, the truth of Christianity will come out more clearly and distinctly, as by means of friction sparks of light are produced, and as by the rubbing of precious metals their brightness is enhanced. From the earliest days of Christianity this conflict between faith and doubt has never ceased entirely. It is the conflict between Christian and anti-Christian teaching, between the Church and the world, as old as the Epistles of St. John -a conflict which throughout has helped towards consummating the triumphs of Christianity. 'The

future cannot contradict the past.' Man, in combatting selfishness and sin, in his nobler aims and aspirations after a higher ideal, in the attempt to work out his destiny, baffled as he is in his attempts by conscious feebleness and inherent frailty, in the presence of adverse circumstances and obstacles manifold which clog his advancing steps, feels the imperative need of sustaining faith, the faith which can remove mountains of difficulty in his path. The evidence of history in the past, confirmed by contemporary confessions in the literature of Scepticism, goes far to prove the supreme importance of belief in human thought and life. For Christians shaken by modern Scepticism, and needing confirmation of their faith, there exists no stronger proof of its veracity than its power to overcome now, as at all times, the forces which are arrayed against goodness as well as truth. The concurrent testimony of nearly nineteen centuries is in favour of the assertion of St. John, which may be tested at any moment of our complicated life in the present day: 'This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.'

THE

PROBLEM OF HUMAN SUFFERING

IN THE

LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY THE

REV. T. STERLING BERRY, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF 'CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM'
(Being the Donnellan Lectures for 1889-90).



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56 PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

Argument of the Tract.

THE Problem of Suffering continually confronts us, and demands an explanation. It has been felt as a difficulty from ancient times; but neither Buddhism nor Stoic philosophy furnishes any true basis for the solution of the problem; and still less does modern Pessimism help us, since it gives up the matter as hopeless.

Holy Scripture does not represent Suffering as an inherent necessity, but as a consequence of sin entering into the world. God is not responsible for its existence, but man, who by the abuse of his free will brought it upon himself. Nevertheless God's overruling Providence turns the evil of Suffering into good, for (1) Suffering is a preventive and a corrective, (2) Suffering is punitive, (3) Suffering is educational and disciplinary. The Incarnation and Atoning work of the Son of God furnish the true key for the practical solution of the problem in the present, and point us on to the bright hope of the removal of its subject in the future.

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN SUFFERING.

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HERE are some problems with which we The nature are confronted which we can well afford either to put aside altogether, or else to discuss in a calm, unmoved spirit-

abstract problems which, though they may excite the curiosity of inquisitive minds, do not in any sense touch us so as to make us concerned in their solution, and profound problems which we feel at once to be so far above our comprehension that it is useless for us even to attempt to grasp their meaning, much less to endeavour to unravel their mystery.

But there are other problems from which there is no escape. We may try to avoid them, but they decline to avoid us. They force themselves upon our attention. They touch us, nay, more, they pierce to our heart's core. They affect all that we hold dearest. They imperiously demand a hearing, and as imperiously challenge a solution.

To this class belongs the problem of the mystery The mystery of Suffering. We can scarcely conceive of it as of universal being, under any circumstances, merely an abstract problem. Even if suffering did not touch ourselves, nor our fellows, still, to know of its existence any-

interest.

The position of the angels,

where, to see its traces, to hear its exceeding bitter cry, would be sufficient to arouse our sympathy, and make us, in some measure, feel with those who suffer. This is the position which, according to the Christian faith, is held by the angels. Inexperienced themselves in pain, nevertheless we cannot think of them as unmoved spectators of human misery. Those whose mission it is to minister to man we must conceive of as entering into our feelings, in some measure feeling our pain. Sorrow in heaven may seem, at first, a contradiction in terms; but if there is 'joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,' there may be sorrow among the angels over the sin and the suffering of the sons of men.

Suffering is an element in every human life. Circumstanced, however, as we are now ourselves, the mystery of suffering continually confronts us. It affects both ourselves and all around us. Has there ever been, we are inclined to ask, one human being that has not keenly felt it?—one so happy that he has never, with an aching heart, cried, 'Whence and why this suffering'?—one so utterly insensible or insensitive that he has not, at some time, bowed beneath the burden of the dread world-sorrow?

Can the problem be solved!

Is this a problem capable of even a partial solution, a mystery which it is possible in some measure to unravel? Or must we give it up in despair, and endeavour to content ourselves with the cheerless conclusion that suffering is an inevitable and inexplicable accompaniment of existence?

It will narrow the subject, and make it more suffering of manageable, if we deal only with the mystery of animals an suffering so far as it affects humanity. We know quantity. comparatively little of how pain affects other animals. There is, however, one law which may be mentioned in passing, that throws some light upon this aspect of the subject. In mankind the capability of suffering is a variable factor, a factor which varies according to the fixed principle that the higher and more developed the subject is, the greater is the capacity; the lower and less developed, the less also the capacity. Wild and savage nations are, as a rule, far less sensitive to pain than those that stand higher in the scale of civilization. Every development of natural life, every onward stride in the line of being, involves, as a consequence, a quickening and a sensitizing of the feelings.

animals

than man.

If we carry this law down the gradations of Other animal life, we reach the conclusion that other probably feel pain animals suffer far less acutely than man, the capa- less keenly city for pain being inferior to his. Many human joys are unknown to them, but much of human suffering also falls not to their lot. This is one aspect of the law of compensation which so wonderfully pervades the universe, the law that teaches us that there is by no means such irregularity and want of adjustment as we are at times apt to suppose.

We, however, are concerned not with the suffering of the lower animals, but with the known factor of suffering in humanity. How far can it be accounted for? How can it best be met and endured?

The problem has been discussed since very early times. The mystery of suffering is one of the oldest and most far-reaching problems that the human mind has set itself to encounter. Some of the leading systems of religion and of philosophy have had it for their basis.

It formed an important element in Hinduism.

In ancient India, Hindu philosophers as they reasoned of the Âtman, the world spirit, were led to contrast the destiny of man with all that they believed concerning the impersonal spirit, who, according to their view, could alone be rightly said to exist. They described the Âtman as 'the self, free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing but what it ought to desire, and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine.' In a life of ascetic self-renunciation, which severed the bonds that united each individual to existence, and which prepared the way for reabsorption into the Âtman, they found the solution to the enigma of life.

It was emphasized by the system of Gautama, the founder of Buddhism. What is true of the speculations of ancient Hindu philosophy is emphasized and accentuated by the new departure adopted by Gautama, the founder of Buddhism. In the Buddhist system existence and sorrow become convertible terms. The four 'noble truths' which form the kernel of the creed, are thus summarized in the Dhammapada, 'Pain, the origin of pain, the destruction of

¹ Khandôgya-Upanishad, viii. 1, 5. Sacred Books of the East, vol. i. p. 127. See also P.D. Tract, No. 33, p. 49.

'Noble

Truths' of

Buddhism.

pain, and the eight-fold holy way that leads to the quieting of pain' (Dh. 191). This brief summary is expanded in a form which enables us to see how inseparable Gautama believed the connection to be between existence and sorrow.

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is The four suffering; decay is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering. Presence of objects we hate is suffering; separation from objects we love is suffering; not to obtain what we desire is suffering. Briefly, the five-fold clinging to existence is suffering.'

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the cause of suffering: thirst, that leads to rebirth, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. This thirst is threefold: namely, thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity.'

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: (it ceases with) the complete cessation of this thirst-a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion—with the abandoning of this thirst, with the doing away of it, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.'

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the path which leads to the cessation of suffering: that holy eight-fold path, that is to say, right belief, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right means of livelihood, right endeavour, right memory, right meditation.' 1

Now, if it be further inquired how these rules of Practical conduct would practically operate in the guidance of the life of those who adopted them, we are left in no doubt as to the answer. In the chapter of the Dhammapada that treats of pleasure, it is taught—

consequences of adopting this rule of life.

'He who gives himself to vanity and does not give himself to meditation, forgetting the real aim (of life) and grasping at pleasure, will in time envy him who has exerted himself in

¹ Mahâvagga i. 6, 19-22. Sacred Books of the East, vol. xiii. p. 95.

meditation. Let no man ever look for what is pleasant, or what is unpleasant. Not to see what is pleasant is pain, and it is pain to see what is unpleasant. Let therefore no man love anything; loss of the beloved is evil. Those who love nothing and hate nothing have no fetters. From pleasure comes grief, from pleasure comes fear; he who is free from pleasure knows neither grief nor fear. From affection comes grief, from affection comes fear; he who is free from affection knows neither grief nor fear. From lust comes grief, from lust comes fear; he who is free from lust knows neither grief nor fear. From love comes grief, from love comes fear; he who is free from love knows neither grief nor fear. From greed comes grief, from greed comes fear; he who is free from greed knows neither grief nor fear.'

The summum bonum of Buddhism.

The summum bonum of Buddhism follows as a natural consequence from these fundamental principles. It is a condition of apathy, in which the emotional part of human nature has been not only mortified, but as far as possible annihilated. The Buddhist Arahat has for his highest act of meditation a state of equanimity in which

'All sentient beings are regarded alike, one is not loved more than another, nor hated more than another; towards all there is indifference.'

He who has reached to this height has severed all the chains and fetters that bind him to existence. He has but to live out the remainder of his present life, and then in its fulness he receives the reward of Nirvâna, of which it is said—

'The old is destroyed, the new has not arisen; those whose minds are disgusted with a future existence, the wise who have destroyed their seeds (of existence, and) whose desires do not increase, go out like this lamp.' ²

¹ Dhammapada, 209-216. Sacred Books of the East, vol. x. p. 56.

² Kúlavagga, 234. Sacred Books of the East, vol. x. p. 39.

'Who, except the noble, deserve the well-understood state of Nirvâna? Having perfectly conceived this state, those free from passion are completely extinguished.' 1

It must be noted that, according to Buddhist Buddhism teaching, suffering is inseparable, not merely from human existence, but from existence under any ing are form or conditions. The Devas are said to envy those who have attained Nirvana. The desire for existence even in one of the heavenly worlds is a fetter from which an individual must free himself before he can attain to the exalted position of an Arahat.

teaches that existence and sufferabsolutely inseparable.

Three lines of criticism suggest themselves in reference to the Buddhist mode of regarding the problem of suffering.

1. It is exaggerated. Every phase of life is This view of made to be inextricably interwoven with suffering. For a man to think himself happy is, according to Buddhist teaching, a sure sign that he is unhappy, because he has not learned the noble truth of suffering. Experience raises its protest against such a view. It tells us life has its joys as well as its sorrows; its days of brightness as well as its hours of darkness.

life is exaggerated.

2. The path of deliverance is non-natural and in- The path of jurious. To enjoin the annihilation of all emotion is injurious. is to do violence to some of the highest instincts of humanity. The noblest deeds that stand recorded in imperishable characters upon the annals of bygone days have been inspired by some emotion

deliverance

¹ Mahâvagga, 765. Sacred Books of the East, vol. x. p. 145.

of the heart of man. The apatheia of the Stoic produces no doubt the passive virtues of patient endurance and uncomplaining suffering. But we have to look for the presence of stronger and more active qualities in order to make the hero.

The goal of Buddhism is absolutely hopeless.

3. Its goal is absolutely hopeless. Buddhism knows nothing of the dawn of a brighter day for the world and for human-kind. Suffering is an unmixed evil. Existence and suffering are inseparable. In the extinction of existence the end of suffering can alone be found. Buddhism, therefore, while admitting the problem of suffering as universally present, offers no solution of its existence, and gives no real help in enduring our own share in it.

Greek philosophy stands in contrast with Oriental speculation.

In Greek philosophy, the same tendency which so strongly characterises Oriental speculations reappears, but in a modified form. The enervating and relaxing environment amidst which Indian thinkers were placed considerably affected their conceptions. They were almost irresistibly drawn towards Pessimism. Their mode of life and their external circumstances developed in them morbid ideas of human destiny. In Greece there was far more of brightness. A healthier climate and happier surroundings guarded Greek philosophy from being overtainted with dismal ideas of men and things.

And yet we look in vain in this direction for a satisfactory solution of the problem of suffering.

There is no question but that, in many respects, Stoic philosophy represents what was best and truest in Greek thought. According to the Stoic,

The leading features of Stoic philosophy.

'The supreme end of life, or the highest good, is virtue, i.e., a life conformed to Nature, the agreement of human conduct with the all-controlling law of Nature, or of the human with the divine will. Virtue is sufficient for happiness. It alone is a good, in the full sense of that word; all that is not virtue nor vice is neither a good nor an evil, but a something intermediate. Pleasure follows upon activity, but should never be made the end of human endeavour. The cardinal virtues are practical wisdom, courage, discretion, and justice. The sage is without passion, although not without feeling; he is not indulgent, but just toward himself and others; he alone is free; he is king and lord, and is inferior in inner worth to no other rational being, not even to Zeus himself; he is lord also over his own life, and can lawfully bring it to an end by his own free self-determination.'1

'Virtue is sufficient for happiness, not because it renders us insensible to pain, but because it makes us superior to it. No act as such is either praiseworthy or disgraceful; even those actions which are regarded as the most criminal are good when done with a right intention; in the opposite case they are wrong. Since life belongs to the class of things indifferent, suicide is permissible, as a rational means of terminating life. The emotions, of which the principal forms are fear, trouble, desire, and pleasure (with reference to a future or present supposed evil or good), result from the failure to pass the right practical judgment as to what is good and what evil; no emotion is either natural or useful.'2

Even this brief summary of Stoic thought enables us to perceive the difference of attitude bility of between Oriental and Greek philosophy in dealing with the problem of human life and destiny. India the problem was given up as hopeless.

It admitted the possihappiness, and pointed out how In happiness might be attained.

¹ Ueberweg's History of Philosophy, vol. i. p. 197.

² Ibid., p. 200.

Under no circumstances was it admitted that life could be aught but a weary burden. Every effort of the intelligent was to centre in escaping from life as effectually as possible. But in Greece, philosophy set itself to show men the path of happiness. Even the Stoics admitted the possibility of happiness, though they rightly taught that the wise man must not make happiness his 'being's aim and end.' Suicide was a refuge only when failure had stamped itself upon a man's existence.

Nevertheless it cannot be claimed for the Stoics that in the system which they adopted they have any claim to have dealt satisfactorily with the problem of suffering. For—

Stoic philosophy was based upon an unreal foundation? (1) The system was unreal. In common with every school of Greek philosophy, the Stoics sought to bridge over the apparent dualism in the universe, and to resolve dualism into unity. They endeavoured to effect this by a system of Pantheism,

'The world is God's body, God, the world's soul . . . All in it (i.e. the world) is equally divine, for the divine power equally pervades all. In it God is the eternal necessity which subjects all to unalterable law, the rational providence which duly forms and frames all, the perfect wisdom which upholds the order of the universe, commands and rewards the good, forbids and corrects the bad. . . . Even evil (within certain limits) belongs to the perfection of the whole, as it is the condition of virtue (injustice, for example of justice); the system of the universe could not possibly be better or fitter for its purpose than it is.'

The problem was denied, not solved.

It is a poor way of solving a problem to assert merely that there is no problem. Yet this is the

¹ Schwegler's History of Philosophy, p. 125.

necessary consequence of Pantheism, such as that adopted by the Stoics. When the assertion is made—

'And that which men so blindly evil call,
And hate and fear, this evil after all
Is but as those discordant notes whereby
Well-skilled musicians heighten melody;
But as the dark-ground cunning painters lay,
To bring the bright hues into clearer day:
'Tis good, as yet imperfect, incomplete;
Fruit that is sour, while passing on to sweet.'

We answer-

'Let him display his skill
On the world's woe who does not feel its ill,
Let speculate the man who feels no pain,
To whom the world is all a pageant vain:

Me the deep feeling of its mighty woe Robs of all wish herein my skill to show: I only know that evil is no dream, A thing that is, and does not merely seem.'

(2) It was consequently inoperative. For it neither furnished any weapon by which the sum of suffering and of sorrow might be diminished, nor did it afford any real help to those who were bowed down beneath its crushing weight. Stoicism practically said to the sorrowful and suffering—
'Steel your heart against the natural emotions that make themselves felt by you. Cultivate the spirit that will enable you to bear the heaviest sorrow and the greatest joy with an equally unmoved calm. If you fail, and life proves too much for you, then the remedy lies within your reach; quit life, if you cannot endure life.'

philosophy furnished no practical help to the suffering.

¹ The Pantheist; or, the Origin of Evil, by Archbishop Trench.

It fostered a selfish spirit.

(3) It fostered selfishness. For its root spirit was essentially and of necessity cold and hard. If a man steels himself to bear with unruffled composure his own troubles and sufferings, he will find it a very easy task to make himself indifferent to the sorrows and pains of those around him. Self-confident and self-restrained, the Stoic went through the world congratulating himself upon his superiority to others, and looking down upon those who had failed to attain to his own lofty eminence. The world would assuredly be less sensitive if Stoicism were to become a universally adopted system, but mankind would be no happier, and the world-sorrow would remain just as before, quite as real, even if less keenly felt.

Modern
pessimism
deals with
the problem
of suffering
from the
nonreligious
standpoint.

In modern systems, the school of pessimistic philosophy may be taken as typical of the non-religious method of regarding the problem of pain. It cannot be denied that there is a growing tendency to Pessimism. It is the prevailing characteristic not merely of much of the present-day philosophy, but also of a good deal of our literature and poetry. It is worth while hearing what pessimists have to say concerning human life and destiny. Schopenhauer may fairly be regarded as the ablest exponent of this school of thought. He writes—

Schopenhauer teaches suffering to be inseparable from life.

'Unless suffering is the direct and immediate object of life, our existence must entirely fail of its aim. It is absurd to look upon the enormous amount of pain that abounds in the world, and originates in needs and necessities inseparable from life itself, as serving no purpose at all, and the result of

mere chance. Each separate misfortune, as it comes, seems, no doubt, something exceptional; but misfortune in general is the rule.'1

These are the opening words of an essay, 'On the Sufferings of the World.' It will be noted that prevailing already Schopenhauer makes suffering an inherent life. necessity and also the prevailing element in life. He goes on to add-

And that it element in

'The pleasure in this world, it has been said, outweighs the pain; or, at any rate, there is an even balance between the two. If the reader wishes to see shortly whether this statement is true, let him compare the respective feelings of two animals, one of which is engaged in eating the other.'2

Suffering, however, he admits is by no means The woes of an unmixed evil. We are curious to hear from a pessimist what purpose it serves-

adversity according to Schopen. hauer.

'Misfortune has its uses: for as our bodily frame would burst asunder if the pressure of the atmosphere were removed, so if the lives of men were relieved of all need, hardship, and adversity, if everything they took in hand were successful, they would be so swollen with arrogance that, though they might not burst, they would present the spectacle of unbridled folly-nay, they would go mad. . . . Certain it is that work, worry, labour, and trouble, form the lot of almost all men all their life long. But if all wishes were fulfilled as soon as they arose, how would men occupy their lives? what would they do with their time? If the world were a paradise of luxury and ease, a land flowing with milk and honey, where every Jack obtained his Jill at once and without any difficulty, men would either die of boredom or else hang themselves; or there would be wars, massacres, and murders; so that in the end mankind would intlict more suffering on itself than it has now to accept at the hands of Nature.'3

¹ Studies in Pessimism (Eng. Trans.) p. 11. ² Ib. p. 12. ³ Ib. p. 12.

He denies the possibility of happiness. The essay 'On the Sufferings of the World' is followed by another upon 'The Vanity of Existence.' Here, if possible, the colours are darker and more gloomy—

'In the first place, a man never is happy, but spends his whole life in striving after something which he thinks will make him so; he seldom attains his goal, and when he does, it is only to be disappointed; he is almost shipwrecked in the end, and comes into harbour with masts and rigging gone. And then it is all one whether he has been happy or miserable; for his life was never anything more than a present moment always vanishing; and now it is over.'

We naturally ask, why, with such a conception of existence, continue to live? Schopenhauer states unreservedly that if the human family were governed by reason, and reason only, the race would speedily cease to exist.

'If children were brought into the world by an act of pure reason alone, would the human race continue to exist? Would not a man rather have so much sympathy with the coming generation as to spare it the burden of existence? or, at any rate, not take it upon himself to impose that burden upon it in cold blood?'²

Suicide condemned by Schopenhauer as inexpedient. Nevertheless he condemns suicide, not indeed as an act of wrong, for this he most indignantly repudiates: he regards it rather as a mistake—

'Suicide thwarts the attainment of the highest moral aim by the fact that for a real release from this world of misery, it substitutes one that is merely apparent.'³

The meaning is explained by a note appended in Bailey Saunders' English translation of the Essay on Suicide. 'According to Schopenhauer,

¹ *Ib.* p. 35. ² *Ib.* p. 15. ³ *Ib.* p. 48.

moral freedom—the highest ethical aim—is to be obtained only by a denial of the will to live. Far from being a denial, suicide is an emphatic assertion of this will. For it is in fleeing from the pleasures, not from the sufferings of life, that this denial consists. When a man destroys his existence as an individual, he is not by any means destroying his will to live. On the contrary, he would like to live, if he could do so with satisfaction to himself, if he could assert his will against the power of circumstance; but circumstance is too strong for him.'

The Studies on Pessimism are worth perusing, if only for the sake of seeing how the imagination can be trained so to regard a subject that it becomes not what it is in reality, but what it is by this effort made to be. There are some strong, vigorous strongly words that John Stuart Mill wrote which are such a well worth quoting in this connection.

J. S. Mill morbid view of life.

'In things which do not depend on us, it is not solely for the sake of a more enjoyable life that the habit is desirable of looking at things and at mankind by preference on this pleasant side; it is also in order that we may be able to love them better and work with more heart for their improvement. To what purpose, indeed, should we feed our imagination with the unlovely aspect of persons and things? All unnecessary dwelling upon the evils of life is at best a useless expenditure of nervous force. It is often waste of strength to dwell on the evils of life, it is worse than waste to dwell on its meannesses and basenesses. It is necessary to be aware of them; but to live in their contemplation makes it scarcely possible to keep up in oneself a high tone of mind. The imagination and feelings become tuned to a louder pitch; degrading instead of elevating associations become connected with the daily objects and incidents of life, and give their

colour to the thoughts, just as associations of sensuality do in those who indulge freely in that sort of contemplation.... When the reason is strongly cultivated, the imagination may safely follow its own end, and do its best to make life pleasant and lovely inside the castle, in reliance on the fortifications raised and maintained by reason round the outward bounds.' ¹

Schopenhauer's life and teaching furnish a striking proof of Mill's words.

It would be hard to find a more signal illustration of the truth of Mill's words than Schopenhauer himself. A selfish cynic, who lived with no regard for the fulfilment of even the commonest duties; neglectful of his clever and charming mother; so devoid of humanity as to kick his landlady downstairs, thereby crippling her for life; his writings are at once the mirror of his own inner life and the fuel by which he fed the bitter spirit that possessed him. To him conscience was merely a resultant of the fear of man, superstition, prejudice, vanity, and custom. He had no higher origin to ascribe to virtue than self-love. Neither sympathy, nor self-sacrifice, nor any generous impulse of human nature, find a place in his conception of the elements that make up the character of mankind.

Schopenhauer's system is merely a reproduction of the worst elements in Buddhism.

There is scarcely one original factor in Schopenhauer's philosophy. It is a reproduction of the worst features of Buddhism. Eliminating the high and noble elements that entered into the teaching of Gautama and his followers in ancient times, modern pessimists have retained all that was gloomy and disheartening in that earlier system.

Assuredly it cannot be claimed for Pessimism

¹ J. S. Mill, Three Essays on Religion, p. 247.

that it even attempts to grapple with the problem Pessimism of pain. It starts with the hopelessness of the situation as an indisputable axiom. It paralyses problem of every effort that might be made for the benefit of the world, by assuring those who would make the effort that they are fools for their pains. It enervates human nature by developing a morbid imagination that creates the gloomy facts which it next proceeds to interpret. And it gives the lie to every heroic life and to every noble deed that stand recorded upon the pages of history.1

does not evenattempt to solve the suffering.

We turn now to Holy Scripture, to see if it gives an answer to the difficulty, and enables us to understand what other systems fail to interpret and to explain.

The light which Holy Scripture throws upon the subject.

1. The Bible does not represent pain as being necessarily interwoven with the destiny of mankind. Here at the outset a ray of hope shines forth: for, if we have to start with the understanding that pain must exist, the solution of the problem becomes impossible. On the other hand, admitting that there was a time when there was no suffering for man, we are irresistibly led on to look forward to a time when, for those who accept God's offers of mercy, suffering shall be no more.

It teaches that suffering is not bound up with human existence.

Now, Holy Scripture tells us that when God created the world He made all things bright and suffering pure and beautiful. As He surveyed His work upon its completion, His verdict is summed up in

At the beginning had no place amongst the works of God.

¹ Cf. Modern Pessimism, Present Day Tract, No. 34.

that He had made, and behold it was very good. At that time there was in the lot of man neither death, nor decay, nor sorrow, nor pain. It was the will of God that as He made all things, so should all things continue. But when God was about to create man, He did not create mere automata, beings to be moved like pawns upon the chessboard of history by an invisible and an irresistible power, beings, in other words, without volition or capacity for choice, but He created moral agents with free-will and freedom of action.

If we are free, we can certainly obey; but we can also disobey; we can serve, but we can also rebel. Holy Scripture tells us that, foreseeing the possibility of man rebelling, God yet adopted this latter course. We can understand why He did so.

The purpose of the tree of knowledge was to test and to teach man.

The opening chapters of the Book of Genesis teach that man from the first was placed in a state of probation, by which his moral nature was to be tested and developed. The prohibition uttered against partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil did not signify that man was to be kept in a condition of childlike innocence. The tree was at once the test and the lesson-book. By it man was to be proved, whether he would follow God's will or his own: by it he was to learn that whatever God commanded was good, whatever He forbade was evil.

God made man free. Surely this, as Origen

taught long ago, is one of the principal meanings Freedom of of the words, 'God made man in His Own Image, in the Image of God made He him.'

Man misused his liberty, and disobeyed the Divine command. Sin entered the world, and together with sin, death, sorrow, pain, evil of every kind came upon man. Thus the problem of suffering, so far at least as concerns mankind, assumes a new aspect. We cease to regard it as an absolute necessity: the very fact that it had a beginning implies the possibility of it having also an end.

2. God cannot be held responsible for the pain and sorrow of life. The gist of the difficulty that arises from the prevalence of suffering with many minds is how to reconcile this aspect of life with the goodness and love of God. But, according to the testimony of Scripture, it is not God, but man who is responsible for its existence. If the will of God had been done by man, there would be for him neither suffering nor evil of any kind in the world. God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.

It is strange, if we think of it, how much more disposed men are as a rule to connect God with evil rather than with good. The words 'Thy will God with be done' have become synonymous with an expres- with good. sion of submission to some trial, or of resignation to some heavy blow. If a desolating plague visits a country, it is immediately described as a Divine visitation, although in many cases the plague can

the will a main element of the Divine Image in which man was created.

Suffering subsequent to and the consequence of sin.

Suffering therefore the result of man's abuse of his free

Men are more disposed to associate trouble than be directly traced to the neglect on the part of man of some known laws of health.

But many human troubles come directly from human agency. So of shipwrecks and fires, of sudden losses and unlooked-for disasters, men say of them that they are to be referred to the mysterious dispensations of Divine providence, whereas in the vast majority of cases there are plain indications that they spring rather from the folly and carelessness of human beings. To state the matter broadly, evil in its origin cannot be ascribed to the absolute will of God; though sometimes what seems to be evil but is really good is sent by Him. And as the Supreme Ruler of the universe He does sometimes send punishment upon the ungodly even in this life.

The testimony of the Book of Job as to human suffering. It is worth while to pause here, so as to notice that the whole testimony of Scripture, Old and New Testament alike, points in the direction that has just been indicated. Naturally, the opening chapters of the Book of Job occur to the mind, as strongly confirmatory of the fact that neither pain nor evil come directly from God. There we find the distinct intervention of the adversary, Satan, as the suggester and the inflicter of suffering and of loss upon the patriarch. It is quite true that a Divine permission was necessary at each step; but nevertheless the active agent and the originating cause was not God, but the enemy.

The testimony of our Lord in regard to those whom He healed. The testimony of the New Testament is, however, even stronger. Our Lord, in speaking of the woman with the spirit of infirmity, expressly declares that it was Satan who had bound her.1 The symptoms in the case of the boy healed immediately after the transfiguration, we should describe as those of epilepsy combined with lunacy; yet our Lord treats the malady as the operation of the evil one.

Underlying the different cases that our Lord was brought in contact with, we find His recognition of the truth that bodily and mental disorders of various kinds are in very deed the works of Satan. Hence, we can give the broadest interpretation to the words of St. Peter, which he uses as descriptive of the life of Christ, 'He went about The great doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the Incarthe devil; and to the parallel words of St. John, our Lord ' For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, destroy the that He might destroy the works of the devil.' 2 In close accordance with these testimonies is the language used by St. Paul of the thorn in the flesh, which he calls 'the messenger of Satan,' sent to buffet him. Stronger still are the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the writer gives the great purpose of the incarnation and death of our Lord, 'Forasmuch as the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself, in like manner, partook of the same, that through death He might bring to nought him that hath the power of deaththat is, the devil.' The clearest comment on these words will be found by combining two passages in the Epistles of St. Paul, in which the initial and

nation of was to works of the

² 1 John iii, 8. 1 St. Luke xiii, 16,

final victory of our Lord over death are set forth: 'Our Saviour Christ Jesus abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel' (2 Tim. i. 10); and 'The last enemy that shall be abolished is death' (1 Cor. xv. 26).

Two conclusions follow from this view. In the first place, as God is not the Author of the sin and suffering of the world, He cannot be held responsible for their existence and their continuance. And secondly, it does not appear that at present sin and the consequent suffering could be suppressed by Omnipotence without such an annihilation of human liberty as would reduce man to the level of the beasts that perish, and deprive him of his Divine heritage and glory.

This view seems at first to lead to dualism.

3. The overruling providence of God turns suffering into good. There is one objection to which the theory that has been suggested is manifestly open, namely, that it seems to land us in a hopeless dualism—a dualism, moreover, of the worst possible kind, that of two opposing powers presiding over the history and the destiny of man. To adopt such a view would be to make our religion to stand in correspondence with that of the Zend Avesta, in which the perpetual antagonism between Ormuzd and Ahriman—the power of light and the power of darkness—is a leading feature.

Dualism was adopted by Mill as the only solution of the pheromena of Nature, John Stuart Mill was of opinion that between this Persian conception of human destiny and the theory adopted in popular Christianity, there was only a slight shade of difference. He himself, in the end, adopted a kind of dualism as the most rational explanation of the phenomena of Nature. He writes as follows in his Essays on Religion:

'It is not too much to say that every indication of design in the Kosmos is so much evidence against the omnipotence of the Designer. For what is meant by design? Contrivance: the adaptation of means to an end. But the necessity for contrivance-the need of employing means-is a consequence of the limitation of power. . . . Wisdom and contrivance are shown in overcoming difficulties, and there is no room for them in a being for whom no difficulties exist. The evidences, therefore, of natural theology distinctly imply that the author of the Kosmos worked under limitations; that he was obliged to adapt himself to conditions independent of his will, and to attain his ends by such arrangements as these conditions admitted of.' 1

What the precise nature of the opposing force was, Mill finds himself unable to decide. rejects the idea that an intelligent or personal force opposed the Creator, and inclines to the idea that-

'The limitation of his power more probably results either from the qualities of the material-the substances and forces of which the universe is composed-not admitting of any arrangements by which his purposes could be more completely fulfilled; or else the purposes might have been more fully attained, but the Creator did not know how to do it; creative skill, wonderful as it is, was not sufficiently perfect to accomplish his purpose more thoroughly.'2

The denial of an intelligent, personal opposing This theory cuts at the force does not free this theory from the charge of The idea that the Creator was limited in power, wisdom, and benevolence renders dualism

theism in every form.

² *Ib.* p. 186. ¹ Three Essays on Religion, p. 176.

necessary. For it is asserted there are things which He cannot do: a boundary beyond which He cannot go. There is, therefore, a something which opposes Him; nay, there is something which is stronger than He is. Admit this, and the ground is cut from under theism in any form. This something may ultimately prevail; it may sweep away even the Creator Himself.

An omnipotent Being may encompass Himself with self-imposed limitations.

There are two facts which Mill entirely ignores in dealing with the relationship in which the Creator stands to the works of His hand. First, our conception of omnipotence is not necessarily doing everything, but the capacity for doing anything. Mill argues that since the Creator has not done such and such things, therefore He could not do them. But the conclusion is not justified. It is far more rational, and far more in accordance with the testimony of Nature, that some things which God has the power to do, He does not do. He Himself limits His own operation.

Human nature and the disciplinary aspect of life account for what Mill ascribes to limitations in the attributes of God.

Secondly, Mill loses sight of the circumstances of mankind in the world, and the relation in which man stands to the created works of God. Above all, he takes no count of human liberty, and the consequent necessity of the world being a state of probation, in which moral agents are trained and disciplined. If God were to act as Mill thinks He ought to act if omnipotence was one of His attributes, the world would cease to fulfil this purpose. It would become a world free from difficulty, free from danger, and free from temptation.

The true Christian hypothesis is not only more The adapted to satisfy the requirements of the case, it hypothesis is, besides, far more philosophical. We claim for losophical. the Creator that perfection of being and perfection of attributes which the human spirit postulates in One who is 'above all, and through all, and in all.' And the defects which the world and human nature at present seem to manifest, it ascribes, not to a limitation in the power, wisdom or goodness of God, but to such a purpose on His part, so working that the greatest good is ultimately to be brought about, as the laws of His providence fulfil their purpose and attain their end.

Christian is more phi-

There are two main modes of operation in the Divine working of the laws of God's providence. Directly, He wills and works that which is good; indirectly, He turns evil into good by overruling what has a bad purpose in it, so as to make it subserve a good and useful end. Evil is in the world; at present, so far as we can judge, evil cannot be banished from the world; but the providence of God works to conquer evil by good, through making evil turn into good.

providence operates both directly in ordering indirectly in overruling the events of history.

No more striking illustration could be taken of The overthe overruling method in the working of God's providence than the series of events that led up to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many evil of our Lord. agents and evil agencies combined to bring it Judas, with his dishonesty and base treachery; Caiaphas, with his hard heart and callous nature; Pilate, so weak and vacillating;

ruling providence of God is signally illustrated in the dea h

Herod, worldly-minded and sceptical; the chief priests, envious and unrighteously indignant. We cannot suppose for one moment that God willed that these men should be of dispositions so depraved and base. They were altogether different from what God would have had them to be. But He overruled what took place, so that what they intended only for evil turned out to be for good; while they thought merely of gratifying the base passions of their nature, God worked against them by making their purpose subserve the eternal benediction of mankind.

And in the persecutions of His followers.

This is only one instance of the operation of an universal law. It is further exemplified in the case of every persecution that has befallen the Church of Christ. In each case the persecution was prompted by the desire to injure, if possible to destroy, the cause of Christ in the world. But by the overruling of God's providence. they were, on the whole, productive of immeasurable benefit. They were the means of diffusing the knowledge of Christ, as those who were scattered abroad in consequence of persecution went everywhere preaching the word. Martyrs, by their patient endurance, their undaunted courage, their heroic allegiance to their Lord and Master, impressed the minds even of bitter opponents whom no mere arguments would have influenced. The Church itself was purified and strengthened by the fiery ordeal, so that at times of ease and prosperity its teachers had often to

deplore the decadence of Christian life from what it had been when the conflict of persecution had to be endured.

We may express in the widest and most comprehensive form this method of working in the versal laws operation of God's providence. From the time that sin and evil entered into the world, God, the Author of all good, began to fight against these works of the devil. Every special manifestation of evil was overruled in course of time, and turned into good. The onslaughts of the kingdom of darkness upon the kingdom of light, though often attended by an apparent and immediate success, in the long run helped forward the victory of light over darkness. The final issue of the conflict is secure, uncertain though the course of the conflict seems at times to be. Therefore it is that, according to the theory that has been suggested, we are No dualistic not landed in dualism, save only to the extent to involved, which dualism is a necessary consequence of the freedom of the human will. For it must be remembered that any conceded liberty of action involves the possibility of the rupture of absolute obedience. An act of disobedience on the part of a finite being amounts to submission to the authority of a power other than that of God. This is dualism to some extent. But in this case the dangers and the objections that beset dualistic systems are absent, because the power other than that of God which is at work is limited in its operation; it is restrained by the need which exists

It is one of the uniof God to oppose evil by overruling it for good.

theory is because the power of evil is both limited in operation and temporary in duration.

for the Divine permission in its exercise; and it is temporary in its duration.

The overruling providence of God operates in relation to the problem of pain.

We have now to see in what directions the overruling providence of God works in counteracting the evil of pain. To establish a working hypothesis which will meet the requirements of the case, we must set ourselves to prove a proposition which, at first sight, appears hopelessly hard, namely, God so turns the evil of pain into good that, circumstanced as we now are in the world, the absence of pain would be more harmful than its presence.

If this can be established, the sting is taken out of the mystery. But it must be borne in mind that in dealing with this statement it is absolutely necessary to be guided by general tendencies, and not by individual instances.

The question must be dealt with on the line of general tendencies rather than of individual instances.

An individual instance is very liable to assume undue proportions. We are very apt to regard it with warped vision. Some form of pain, or some illustration of pain, will be taken, and it will be asked, 'How could any good, immediate or remote, result from it?' Such a question it is almost always impossible to answer in a satisfactory manner. Our range of observation is too limited. Cause and effect follow so slowly and indirectly, that it is often out of our power to point to the resulting benefit. But the case is quite different if we follow what is indeed the logical course, and deal with general effects and tendencies.

From this point of view there is no difficulty in tracing beneficial results that are brought about,

in the providence of God, from the existence of suffering in the present ordering of human life.

(1) Suffering is a physical preventive and corrective.

At first sight we naturally look upon pain as an aggravation of a malady; its absence, therefore, would be regarded in the light of a mitigation. But a moment's thought will convince us that we are wrong. There are painless diseases, but they are generally the most deadly and dangerous diseases that visit the human frame.

Suffering reveals disease and

Suffering is

a physical

preventive corrective.

Suffering, from the physical standpoint, is Nature's danger signal: it is the indication that there is disease and leads men something astray. It is the pain that arrests the to seek a remody. attention, and that makes us anxious to find a remedy. It is moreover, in many cases, by the nature or the locality of the pain that a correct diagnosis can be made. Let us suppose pain banished altogether, while our bodily organization remains as it is at present. We are inclined to say, 'What a happy change this would make in human life!' And yet, in reality, it would be one of the worst misfortunes that could happen to us. The death-rate would rapidly increase: the number of healthy lives would greatly diminish: it would be hard to say where the mischief that would result to the human race would end. It is hard enough to induce many persons, even under present circumstances, to take care of their health, and to adopt proper treatment when sickness overtakes them: how absolutely impossible it would become

to make an impression upon them if pain ceased to be a concomitant of disease!

From the physical standpoint the presence of pain is a lesser evil than its absence would be.

We must under this heading distinguish between curable and hopeless cases. There is, it must be admitted, very much hopeless suffering in the world. Nevertheless, while fully recognising this fact, if a balance were to be struck between the gain and the loss of suffering from the physical standpoint. what is gained by its presence and what would be lost by its absence, those who are most brought in contact with disease would be the first to admit that gain preponderates over loss. ¹ If it be urged

1 In The Lord of Humanity, by Frederick James Gant, F.R.C.S., Consulting Surgeon to the Royal Free Hospital. this subject is ably treated. He says, "Having been actively engaged in the relief of human suffering for a period of more than forty years, during thirty-seven of which I was a hospital surgeon, it has been my lot to witness more of the turmoils and distress in the body and soul of man than any other sphere of experience, in relation to mankind, could have offered for contemplation. . . . In man's body, as in that of other animals, the functional activities of its constituent parts go on painlessly in the condition of even balance which is called health. Pain, or at least discomfort, is the first sign of any disordered action, or it is the monitor of any injury done to some part of the organism, although this perversion of healthy sensation is not necessarily felt in the part affected. . . . Pain is the indicator to the as yet untaught mind of infancy and childhood, which announces that the body is already touched by some destroying finger within or without. Year by year the experience of past pain, in connection with the various causes which disturb health, or the circumstances which involve the risk of injury, is an education—obviously for the personal preservation of the body: or, if unheeded, suffering assumes the character of a corrective discipline, still to maintain life. . . . With relation, there-

that this aspect of the problem deals with what is a physical law arising from the nature of things, rather than a Divine ordinance, we may answer that this is partly true. The corrective power of pain is not necessarily bound up with the religious view of the subject. But whereas non-religious theories concerning suffering may with perfect fairness avail themselves of this thought, it is equally open to the Christian apologist to make use of it from his own standpoint. For we believe that the Author of Nature is the Author of Nature's laws; we believe our body has come to us from God; and that in view of our present circumstances, the laws of health are appointed by God. One way, therefore, in which the providence of God interposes in this matter, we may fairly claim, is in utilising the evil of pain by overruling it so as to turn it into good, through making pain in many cases the involuntary but none the less real handmaid to health.

(2) Suffering is sometimes punitive. It is necessary in dealing with this aspect of the problem to punitive. speak with great caution. It is exceedingly hard to rid the minds of men of the old Jewish belief, that all trials, all accidents, all adversities, are so many Divine judgments by which God visits the guilty for their offences, and punishes them because of Job testifies that all pain their sins. The Book of Job, to a large extent, is not to be regarded as was intended to counteract and overthrow such a judgment,

Pain is sometimes

The Book of

fore, to both body and soul, suffering is not a curse, but a blessing in disguise" (pp. 139-141).

theory. The three disputants set down their belief with pitiless severity. When Job asserted his innocence, they refused to believe him. Waxing more severe and more dogmatic as the argument went on, they asserted that hidden sin underlay his apparently virtuous and blameless life. They could not say what his sin was, but God, they urged, Himself testified against him; so that the sin was there, only concealed from human view. For their attitude (by no means an uncommon attitude) was that facts must be interpreted so as to coincide with their theories, rather than that the theory should be recast under the new revela-The intervention of Elihu introtion of facts. duced the new element into the discussion, that sufferings may have a purificatory as well as a punitive purpose. And the closing scenes which contain God's vindication of His afflicted servant bore emphatic testimony to the uprightness of Job, a testimony in which the opening chapters equally concurred.

Physical sins lead to physical suffering.

There is, however, an element of truth in the old theory. Suffering is in some cases punitive. That large class of sins, sins connected with bodily appetites, leads to physical infirmity, and often suffering. Such sins are direct violations of a law of Nature. Law cannot be violated with impunity. The consequent pain and penalties are intimations and warnings, even more than judgments. There are many persons who have had cause to be for ever thankful for suffering of this kind, that has served

to stop them short in some sinful course. Surely, then, in all such pain we may detect a beneficent and most merciful purpose. We have only to think of how, in spite of warnings and bitter consequences, so many now shatter their health and ruin their life by sinful self-indulgence in some form or other, in order to be able to conclude how direful the results would be if no physical pain followed physical sin.

But this mode of regarding the subject bears a Suffering wider application and interpretation. For we have involuntary to do not only with positive sins, but also with errors and defects, many of them quite involuntary. Sanitary science and social science are now beginning to occupy their rightful place in the thoughts of men. There is every reason to look forward to a brighter future for the world, when it is generally recognised that these departments of knowledge come within the scope of religion, and form part of the Divinely appointed duty of man.

But what is it that has forced these subjects upon public attention? It is the pain which their neglect has occasioned. The punitive power of pain, by means of which a penalty is exacted for even involuntary violations of law and for unconscious errors in action, has formed no small factor in furthering the progress of the world. Severe though the consequences have often been, yet who can say but that in this case also the presence of pain is better than its absence, and that its effect is more beneficial than injurious?

reveals mistakes as well as wilful transgressions.

The consequent benefit is an additional proof of how pain is overruled for good.

Much human suffering is preventible.

In connection with this thought, when the amount of pain and sorrow in the world is urged by those who take a pessimistic view of human life, it is well to remember that a very large proportion both of pain and sorrow is purely preventible. Care, thought, culture, self-control, these and kindred agencies within man's own grasp, could amazingly diminish the sum total of suffering. It cannot, therefore, be held that the present extent of pain is a necessity inherent in the nature of things. Self-inflicted suffering, suffering that results from carelessness, from ignorance, from violation of known laws must be discounted, in forming our estimate of its inevitable connection with our present experience. If preventible pain were eliminated, the problem would assume far less alarming proportions.

Suffering is educational and disciplinary. (3) Suffering is educational and disciplinary. It is here that we reach the most important aspect of this subject. Suffering is preventive; we may therefore be grateful for it when it fulfils this purpose. Suffering is punitive; for this we certainly ought to be grateful also. But neither of these thoughts is sufficient. They have their place: they have a special significance when they are viewed in their connection with the overruling Providence of God. Yet they may both be admitted fully by those who would refuse to acknowledge that the Providence of God enters in any sense into the matter. They can stand apart from religion as well as be regarded in their association with religion. We

need, therefore, a supplementary thought that will bring the subject into necessary connection with what we believe and hold concerning the laws of God in His government of the world, and the revelation He has given to us as to the purpose and meaning of the various elements in our present experience.

Besides, there is much suffering that can neither Alarge be classed as preventive nor punitive. There of the are hearts bowed down with sorrow, hearts that men is are weary and heavy laden with the burden of preventive pain, and it could not rightly be said that their suffering was intended either to ward off an impending danger or to correct an error or a fault. And it is in such cases that the mystery specially touches us—the innocent suffering for or suffering with the guilty—the sins of fathers visited upon their unoffending offspring—the mistakes and transgressions of society affecting those who are not responsible for its laws—the recklessness of kings and rulers, involving whole states and empires in misfortune and trouble. Here it is that we stand face to face with the real difficulty—here is the crucial problem for solution. And here it is also that religion alone can help us. In vain we seek from philosophy what meets this aspect of human suffering. Philosophy admits the patent fact, but it stands dumb when we demand from it a solution of the difficulty. It holds out no helping hand to guide us; it gives us no anchor of hope with which to moor our frail ships when the fury

proportion suffering of neither punitive.

Before such suffering philosophy stands dumb and religion alone can help us.

of this storm beats down upon us. A man who has forsaken his faith in God and his belief in the working of His Providence finds himself in the presence of such suffering landed in hopeless despair. He cries:—

'O we, poor orphans of nothing—alone on that lonely shore—Born of the brainless Nature who knew not that which she bore!

Trusting no longer that earthly flower would be heavenly fruit—

Come from the brute, poor souls—no souls—and to die with the brute.

Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain,

If every man die for ever, if all his griefs are in vain,

And the homeless planet at length shall be wheeled through the silence of space— $\,$

Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race.

When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last brother worm will have fled

From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth that is dead.' 1

But can religion help where philosophy fails?

Our Christian religion comes forward; and it not merely assays the task, but it makes it a part of the foundation upon which it rests. For the essence of Christianity consists in the great fact of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ assumed our human nature, shared our human experience, and entered into the various aspects of our human life. There are lessons to

The problem of pain an integral element in the Incarnation of our Lord.

His earthly story. And not the least lesson in its importance and in its helpfulness is the light which His experience throws upon the mystery of pain. Prophecy in the Old Testament, centuries before the Incarnation, had depicted the Messiah as 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' The Jews themselves for a time admitted this, and by the theory that there should be two Messiahs, the Son of Joseph or Ephraim, who was to suffer, and the Son of David, who was to reign, endeavoured to explain the apparently conflicting descriptions given by the prophets.¹

That the life of Christ was a life of suffering will be admitted even by those who refuse to admit His claim to be Divine. But from the standpoint of our Christian faith there is one fact in reference to the sufferings of our Lord that must not be forgotten.

Allusion has already been made to the law that holds as to the relative capacity for suffering—the law that the more highly developed and highly organized the subject is, the greater is the capacity for suffering. Of necessity then it follows that in the ideal nature—the nature in which the climax of perfection is reached—we reach also a climax of capacity for suffering. That, therefore, there was in our Lord a faculty of suffering to an intensity that we can only faintly and feebly realize.

The law of the capacity of suffering reveals the intense reality of what our Lord endured.

¹ See Buxtorf, *Lexicon Chaldaicum*, p. 644, and Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, pp. 744–50, where numerous Rabbinical authorities on this subject are quoted.

The Gospels reverently disclose the depth of emotion in our Lord's human nature.

This is no matter of mere speculation. The Gospels, while reverently drawing a veil over much that concerns our Lord's inner life, do occasionally give us some insight into the intensity of feeling that marked His nature. Instances of this are the deep sigh that the hardness of heart in those who opposed Him irresistibly drew from Him; the indignation that His disciples should endeavour to restrain the mothers from bringing their little ones to receive a blessing from His hands; the strong, stern outburst of reproach against the tyranny and cruelty, as well as the hollowness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the Scribes; the burst of tears as the woes of Jerusalem came before Him, even whilst He was beholding its magnificence and glory; the deep disturbance of His spirit in the presence of human sorrow, on the way to the grave of Lazarus; and, above all, the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. These indications, though in most instances only barely mentioned, reveal a nature in which the capacity for suffering must have been beyond all that our thoughts can grasp. It is well to possess ourselves of this fact. There is sometimes a lurking idea in the mind of men that pain was more easily borne by our Lord than it is by us; it would seem to have been far more real and intense.

Why then had Christ to suffer? We speak now not of His death of woe, but rather of His life. Why had He to live this life of suffering?

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews treats

suffering life of the Son

very fully of the purpose of the Incarnation. Two The purpose of the passages in particular deal with our Lord's life of suffering. 'It became Him, for whom are all things, of God. and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings' (chap. ii. 10). 'Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation' (chap. v. 7-9). When we reflect upon the meaning of these verses, we see that they indicate that the suffering life of Christ had a reference to the relationship which God holds to the world. In the former of these passages, two great points in human history are selected—the primal start and the final goal. All things are from God, their Creator; all things are for God, their Possessor. The hand of God and the creative power of God were clearly seen when He spake, and the world was made; when He created, and it stood fast. The purpose of God and the laws of His government will be made manifest, when hereafter we shall see no longer through a mirror things that are obscure, but face to face; when we shall know no more in part, but even as we are known.

But between these two points lies all the present

The life of Christ forms the Divine answer to the agelong cry of suffering humanity.

history of humanity. And it is in allusion to the circumstances of human life now, that it is said. 'It became' God to make our Lord 'perfect through sufferings.' The word for 'it became' denotes a moral fitness—a fitness arising out of the special circumstances of the case. And this moral fitness finds its interpretation in the fact that as 'it behoved Him to be made in all things like unto His brethren' (Heb. ii. 17); so the discipline of life came to Him in the same form in which it comes to us: 'He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.' We must not attempt to winnow away the force of the words. mysterious though their meaning is. We must rather accept them as they stand. They plainly tell us that in the school of suffering our Lord learned the lesson of obedience to the will of God. We may reverently see something of what this means, if we put together four utterances that came from the lips of our blessed Lord: 'Father, save Me from this hour; ' 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done; ' O My Father, if this cup may not pass from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done; ' 'The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?'

Human theories failed to unravel the mystery of suffering. We can now understand the fitness in the suffering life of the incarnate Son of God. It was the Divine answer to one of the deep heart-cries of humanity. Ever since pain and sorrow entered into the world, man had been asking why these

things were so, and why God permitted them to exist. Sometimes impatient sufferers who felt as though they could no longer endure the burden laid upon them, uttered their reproachful pleadings against God; but it seemed as though He heard not, and that He took no notice of their agonized cry. Minds perplexed and anxious faced the problem; but as they looked up to heaven for light and understanding, it appeared as if clouds and darkness alone were round about God's throne: nor could they always discern that righteousness and judgment were the habitation of His seat. Hard and pitiless solutions were often offered to helpless, heart-broken sufferers; solutions, like that of the three disputants with Job, which laid down the law that in suffering there was no mystery, no difficulty; that a just God in such visitations dealt with men after their sins, and rewarded them for their iniquities. The Old Testament closed, leaving the mystery unsolved. But with the New Testament revelation there came the dawn of light. The suffering life of Christ swept away for ever the cold, hard theory that resolves every pain into a penalty, every trial into a chastisement, every accident into a judgment.

His sufferings tell us that if the Well-beloved of The the Father, in whom His soul delighted, bore the of Christ heaviest burden and endured the keenest sorrows, then the darker aspect of our human experience need not necessarily be regarded as a manifestation of the wrath and judgment of God.

sufferinglife an evidence that every pain is not a penalty.

IIis sufferings reveal the Infinite Love of God.

His sufferings the rather reveal the Infinite Love of the Eternal Father. Man sinned; suffering followed in the wake of sin. Instead, however, of leaving man merely to reap the fruit of the evil seed which he had sown, God sought for him; and finally 'spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,' that in Him we might learn alike the depth of human need and the inexhaustible fulness of Divine Love. Christ came to undo what sin had done, to bridge over the chasm which sin had made, to reconcile, to redeem, to restore. Love prompted the plan, for 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' Love executed the Divine purpose, for 'Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases,' because He loved us and gave Himself for us.

The great purpose of the present life is the education of mankind.

But further, from the sufferings of Christ we can learn also the chief purpose for which God uses this element in the life of humanity during the present time. For if we ask ourselves, What is the great aim and end of our life here? we find that we can best answer the question by another inquiry, viz.: What is the great object of a parent in educating and disciplining a child during the early years of his life? No wise parent makes it his first and only object to give a child a perfectly happy child-hood. Before happiness comes the desire to prepare the child for his after-life by the development and strengthening of the character.

Immediate and apparent happiness has some-

times, nay, has often, to be sacrificed in order to In the gain this higher and better end. A child thinks it hard to be called in from play during the bright days of summer sunshine to learn a task that seems to him dull and uninteresting. A child thinks it hard to be balked and disappointed by having his will crossed and his inclination thwarted. Foolish parents yield, often against their better judgment, to the importunity and entreaty of a child, and allow him to have his own way. Those who are wise, and sensible of their responsibility, feel that they must not allow themselves to adopt such a course; that if in after life a child is to be able to govern himself, the path to self-government in maturity lies in implicit, absolute obedience in early years.

relation of parent and child immediate happiness has to be made subservient to ultimate

And God, the infinitely best Teacher, the wise God plans and loving Father of us His children on earth, desires that life should do for us in the way of disciplining and developing of our character its complete and perfect work. And that this may be so He also sets our good before what we are apt to regard as our happiness. And the way in which, above all else, He utilizes and overrules existing pain, is by making it subserve this purpose. Suffering disciplines and purifies, therefore it ennobles and elevates the character. If it produces an opposite result, it is we ourselves, and not God. who is to blame. A child can make his childhood wretched, and almost fruitless, by perpetually kicking against the restraints and discipline to

human life so as to make it accomplish the disciplining and developing of character which he is subjected. We can make our life unhappy and unprofitable by always rebelling against God and by fretting against what He seeks to turn into good for us. Imagine a painless, utterly tranquil life, with our human nature what it is, and what else can we conclude than that we should emerge from that life as undisciplined and enervated as a youth sent to face the battle of life after a childhood in which he was permitted to gratify every whim and fancy?

Human experience is therefore wisely ordered by the good providence of God. However it be in moments of weakness and of depression, nevertheless, when calmly and quietly we consider life as it is, and contrast it with life as at times we would fain have it to be, our wiser instincts tell us it is better that human experience, even its darker side, should be as God's providence now permits. For we are not left without an answer even to the hardest part of the problem—that of the sufferings which the innocent bear for, or at least share with the guilty. We know that such sufferings, even when they are wholly unmerited, are not without their purpose: that those who are exercised thereby are taught lessons which, so far as we can see, could at present be learned in no other way.

The Christian answer to the problem of human suffering.

To sum up the argument. The mystery of pain consists mainly in the difficulty of reconciling existing suffering with the Power, the Wisdom, and the Love of God. Our Christian faith comes forward, and, without attempting or pretending to

clear up all the intricacies of the problem, assures us that it is possible for us, even now, to see that the absence of suffering in human life would be a greater evil than its presence. That much suffering is preventive, and averts calamities from coming upon us. That some suffering is punitive, and thereby deters or checks men who otherwise would ruin themselves by sinful indulgence. That all pain is lovingly and wisely overruled by our Heavenly Father, provided that we do not hinder His gracious purpose, and is made to bring about the development of our character, and to fit us for a higher and a nobler life.

Doubtless in part the mystery remains. God The mystery only does not, in this present life, furnish us with the partially means of reading every riddle and of solving every problem. But even when all theories fail to help us, when the human heart bows down beneath the crushing weight of a heavy burden of sorrow or of pain, even then our Christian faith does not leave us without help and support. The But the great fact that God has given His Son to die for God's love us, thereby proving that He is a God of love, makes it impossible for us to doubt His wisdom or goodness.

removed.

gives present

And the sympathy of Christ comes to us with As does the strengthening power, as we realize that He who of Christ. bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, still, though in heaven exalted at the right hand of the Father, retains His human nature and the traces of His human sufferings, and stretches forth to us

And He points us on to a bright and cloudless future.

His right hand to uplift and to sustain us. And He who gives us help for the present, gives us hope also for the future. For He points us on to the final victory of good over evil, of the Kingdom of Christ over the works of the devil. Then 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.' And we shall be satisfied also. For the mystery of pain shall then be fully solved. We shall learn the need and the object of every sorrow and of every suffering. We shall see the wise and loving purpose that designed and overruled all for good. Not only so, but then also 'God / shall wipe away all tears from our eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain—for the former things shall have passed away.'



THE 'PSALMS OF DAVID'

AND

MODERN CRITICISM.

BY

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Argument of the Tract,

THE Present Day Tract No. 64 having dealt with the contents of the Psalter as a proof of Divine inspiration, an attempt is made in the following pages to estimate the evidence for the Davidic authorship of the early portions, and the bearing of the question upon religious belief. The 'Songs of Zion,' as a whole, are assigned by many modern critics to a much later period than that generally held; in opposition to what appears to be the testimony of Scripture regarding (I) the character of David as a prophet, (2) his work as the poet of the sanctuary. (3) his life as reflected in the Psalms.

The 'Higher Criticism' briefly defined and estimated. appeal to the general intelligence, not only to scholars and experts. Anti-supernatural assumptions inadmissible. The critical position. (1) Attempted reconstruction of the Hebrew history. Critics reject the received view of the Psalms, chiefly because inconsistent with their theory. Counter-evidence of early religious life in the people. (2) The character of David in the history and in the Psalms. A real accordance; reasons for superficial difference. (3) Inconsistency of the contents with the alleged occasion of many Psalms. Testimony of the superscriptions; proofs of their antiquity and credibility. Individual exceptions. Positive arguments for Davidic authorship: impossibility otherwise of accounting for the national belief. Personal character of many Psalms. The 'Church-Psalm' theory. What has criticism to substitute for the ancient belief? Conflicting views: throwing grave doubt on the method pursued. The question of Maccabæan Psalms. The age uncongenial with the spirit of the Psalter. Witness of the New Testament. Our Lord's argument from Psa. cx. Importance of the whole question to the completeness and stability of our faith in Christ.

A Chronological Table is appended to the Tract to illustrate some of its references.

THE 'PSALMS OF DAVID'

AND

MODERN CRITICISM.

I. THE QUESTION STATED.



HERE are few more pathetic pictures in Jewish history than that of the mourning exiles who sat down 'by the rivers of The 'songs of Zion. Babylon,' and 'wept when they re-

membered Zion.' It was among the bitterest elements of their affliction that their wonted songs of praise were hushed. So they 'hung Psalm 187. their harps upon the willows;' and to their taunting foes, demanding of them 'one of the songs of Zion,' they gave the touching reply, 'How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'

The description bears as much the impress of truth as of pathos. It recalls ancestral memories, reflects the genius of a people, expresses the crowning joy of worship, and not only consists with, but illuminates the long historic record of the nation whom God had chosen for Himself.

It has been reserved for modern days to question

Their date questioned.

the accuracy of the representation. There were at the time, we are told, no such 'songs of Zion' as the Psalm appears to indicate. The prayers and praises which we associate with the ancient sanctuary, and with the names of David, Asaph, and the sons of Korah, are assigned to a far later date in the Hebrew annals. Nay, this pathetic Psalm itself is represented as having nothing to do with the Babylonian exile, saving by way of allusion; the true 'Babylon' being the oppression by Antiochus Epiphanes; and the 'songs,' not those of the 'house of the Lord' destroyed by the hosts of Nebuchadnezzar, but those of the second Temple, which the Syrian governor profaned.

A larger historical question. These startling conclusions reach, of course, far beyond the individual Psalm which we have chosen as an illustration, and require no less than the reconstruction of the whole history of Israel, with a very serious bearing upon the credibility of the inspired records. It may, therefore, be worth while to inquire whether there is any real ground for abandoning the ancient view, especially in regard to the Psalter, the five Books 1 of which have always been regarded as the priceless record of the highest and holiest thoughts of God's chosen people from the days of David through succeeding generations.

It is desirable clearly and carefully to estimate

¹ See Note 2 at the end of this Tract,

the bearing of the historical question upon the religious life. Christian faith and piety, it may Bearing of the question be said, are independent of such matters as date life. and authorship. The truth is the same, whatever the history of the canon. To a certain extent this may be admitted. The heavens still 'declare the glory of God,' whether it were David or some later bard who sang the wonders of the firmament; and Psalms 19. Jehovah is still the 'Shepherd' of His people, although the Twenty-third Psalm should embody no reminiscence of the fields around Bethlehem. So the disquieted soul of the believer still 'thirsteth for God, the living God,' even if its longings were Psalms 42, never breathed in music by the sons of Korah in the Temple of Solomon; and the Christian repairs 'to the sanctuary of God' for light upon the mysteries of Providence, quite irrespective of the question whether it was Asaph, or some later bard of unknown name, who set him the example. Nav, many a devout believer holds that Jesus CHRIST will remain the same, to the trust and the loyalty of the hearts that have found Him, whatever be the history or the meaning of the Psalms which are called Messianic.

But all this is only one side of the question. In christianity another view, Christianity is a historical religion. It challenges our faith on the ground of the credibility of its records. The life of Christ itself becomes intelligible only in the light of a long pre-

ceding history. We learn of Him, not in the first instance by an intuition or an experience, but through a revelation of God's continuous dealing with mankind, a record of the supernatural, continued through successive ages, and culminating in Him. On this important point we shall have more to say at the conclusion of our argument.

II THREE ASPECTS OF THE PSALTER.

In regard to the matter in hand, three points may be specified, as hitherto generally admitted by the Universal Church, and important in their bearing upon faith.

1. The line of David was from a very early

period marked out as that from which the world's Redeemer was to spring. As the 'man after

Messianic

Acts 13, 22,

God's own heart,' divinely chosen to fulfil a great purpose, he was designated to a kingdom which should be typical and preliminary to one both universal and everlasting. Conscious of this high calling, he spoke prophetically, in many a strain of 2 Sam. 23. 1. holy song. He was 'the sweet Psalmist of Israel,' not only because of his poetical or musical endowments, but because there was in his inspired utterances the spirit of high anticipation. His very sorrows were typical of those which should be laid

> upon the Messiah; and the victories of his kingdom prefigured the spiritual conquests by which He who sitteth on the right hand of God should place

all foes beneath His feet.

2. To such prophetic beliefs and hopes a fit Early expression was given in 'the service of song in the sacred song. house of Jehovah.' The tabernacle on Mount Zion, and afterwards the Temple upon Moriah, 1 Chron. were dedicated to continual praise, for which the royal minstrel first, and then a succession of sacred poets, were inspired by the Holy Spirit to provide appropriate utterance. The 'sons of Korah,' the guild (perhaps) of Asaph, with many an unknown Psalmist, contributed both song and music to the constant service. All through the troublous days of the Hebrew monarchy this service continued. Successive Books of Psalms were collected; two, at least, before the Babylonian captivity.1 Then came the period of exile and of silenced song, to break out again when the Lord 'turned again' the Psalm 126. captivity of Zion, and the 'mouth' of the people 'was filled with laughter,' and their 'tongue with singing.' Three other Books, probably edited at different times, and including both earlier and later compositions (among the former the traditional Psalm 90. Prayer of Moses), eventually completed the series; and the whole collection, which had become 'the Hymn-book of the Second Temple,' was currently entitled 'The Psalms of David,' not, of course, because he wrote all, or even the greater part, but because he was chief among these sacred bards, and his spirit pervades the whole.

¹ The Finis to these two books is in Psa. lxxii. 20: 'The Prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.'

Biographical element in the Psalms.

3. These references to David's own work would be incomplete without noting its largely biographical character. In this, as in other respects, Scripture is emphatically a living word. 'life of David' is 'reflected in the Psalms,'1 with his buoyant piety, his love to the Law of Jehovah, his fervid self-communings, his tragical fall, his sublime repentance. In these wonderful compositions, the vicissitudes of his life, which the history sketches in outline, are depicted in vivid colouring. His persecution by Saul, his establishment on the throne of Israel, his bitter troubles with Absalom, his passionate love for his people, the stern conflicts through which the nation had to pass, the king's intervals of peaceful thought, with his rapturous delight in God—all these by turns appear in the Psalms. They are quick with individual emotion. Nor are traces of this emotion absent from the history. Read the story of David at Ziklag in his 'outlaw' days: 'He was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in Jehovah his God.' Such graphic transcripts of experience find an echo in many a Psalm; and it is not too much to say that the history of David's career throughout

1 Sam. 30, 6.

¹ See Dr. Maclaren's work with this title.

needs, for its full comprehension, such light as is thrown upon it by the Psalter. History and Psalm alike bear out the poetic description :-

> Bold to bear God's heaviest load. Dimly guessing of the road— Rocky road, and scarce ascended, Though thy foot be angel-tended; Double praise thou shalt attain. In royal court and battle plain; Then come heartache, care, distress, Blighted hope, and loneliness: Wounds from friends and gifts from foe, Dizzied faith, and guilt, and woe; Loftiest aims by earth defiled. Gleams of wisdom sin-beguiled, Sated power's tyrannic mood, Counsels shared with men of blood, Sad success, parental tears, And a dreary gift of years.1

Such are the views which many generations of Modern believers have found helpful to the spiritual life, and which in the name of criticism we are now bidden to renounce for an altogether different reading, not only of the Psalter, but of the whole course of Hebrew history. Before, then, we give reasons for still holding to the ancient opinion, and to show its bearing upon faith and piety, it may be useful to ask what this criticism is which comes with so large and confident a demand.

III. CRITICAL METHODS ESTIMATED.

THE inquiry is the more necessary, from the The 'Higher Criticism.' epithet sometimes employed -the Higher Criticism.

¹ J. H. Newman: Verses on Various Occasions, etc., p. 118 (Lyra Apostolica, 1836).

reading of the history. The phrase may have been convenient, as employed by Eichhorn, the illustrious Göttingen professor, to distinguish this method of investigation from the simple examination of the Scripture text.

Eichhorn.

'It was necessary,' he writes in 1787, 'to apply my chief endeavours to a field hitherto unbroken, namely, to an inquiry into the internal structure of the separate books of the Old Testament by means of the higher criticism, a term strange to no scholar.' ¹

Objection to the phrase.

The criticism literary and historical.

Seeing, however, that some persons appear to understand the phrase as claiming for this method of study a *superiority* over others, as though its professors held a secret of knowledge, unattainable save by the initiated, it might be advisable to discontinue it. What is really meant by it may be adequately expressed in another way. Call the criticism 'analytical,' 'literary,' 'historical,' and the apparent assumption disappears. Such criticism is in itself perfectly legitimate. The Christian student will wisely investigate the contents as well as the letter of Scripture, and will draw conclusions from them as to date, authorship and purpose; the inferences being often so clear as to outweigh tradition. Results of great and unquestionable value have already been obtained by the wise employment of such methods; and criticism rightly applied will correct the errors of a criticism that is rash or irreverent.

¹ Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament, Preface to the Second Edition, p. xi.

Appeal to the general intelligence.

It is important to add that this form of criticism makes its appeal to the general cultivated intelligence. Some points, indeed, must still be reserved for experts; but the main lines of argument may be followed and estimated by any student possessing literary culture and psychological insight.1 No one then need shrink from the investigation because he does not understand Hebrew. As to the question now under consideration; excepting in regard to a very few obviously later Psalms, the Hebraist advocate of the more recent date does not rest his case upon any alleged modernness in language. The Hebrew of the Psalms is that of the earliest prophets, and there is no reason whatever for supposing that it may not have been current in the time of David or before. So far, then, the ground is clear. The English reader of the Bible, in the authorised or revised version, may judge for himself; only let him be reverent and sincere.

As a simple illustration of the difference between musquestions which require special critical knowledge, Psalm 19. and those which any thoughtful student may solve for himself, we may take the Nineteenth Psalm, which, we are now told by many critics, consists of two

^{1 &#}x27;Questions which are within the scope of any one who reads the English Bible carefully, and is able to think clearly and without prejudice about its contents.'-Dr. Robertson Smith.

Points reserved for experts. distinct odes, or fragments of odes, differing in subject, and 'editorially' thrown together by some undiscerning scribe. Now, if an expert in Hebrew poetry tells us that the style and metre of the Psalm from ver. 7 onwards are so different from the style and metre of the first six verses as to prove a different authorship and date, the general reader can but respectfully listen, or wait for the testimony of some other expert to confirm or correct the conclusion. Or again, when it is maintained by those learned in Hebrew history that to attribute to the time of David the references to 'the law' in the latter part of the Psalm would be an anachronism, we would not pronounce upon the matter off-hand, or till we have heard what other learned historic students may have to say. But when it is added that this second portion of the Psalm has no organic connection with the thought of the former, that it is impossible to conceive one and the same poet making the abrupt transition from the firmament to the law, the question ceases to be one of philology or history, and appeals to the sober judgment of all who have ever deeply felt the harmonies and contrasts between the material and the spiritual worlds. We venture to say that Dr. Watts in his homely paraphrase discerns the secret of the Psalm more truly than the critics:-

Points appealing to the general judgment.

As another instance in point we may adduce Psalm 110.

The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord; In every star Thy wisdom shines, But when our eyes behold Thy word, We read Thy name in fairer lines.

The rolling sun, the changing light, And nights and days Thy power confess; But the blest volume thou hast writ Reveals Thy justice and Thy grace.

the much-discussed Hundred-and-tenth Psalm. On this sublime ode we shall have something to say hereafter; but our present point is the right and the power of cultivated readers generally to judge for themselves of much modern criticism; and when such readers find that the great Hebrew professor Dr. Ferdinand Hitzig of Heidelberg, makes the lustful and tyrannical Alexander Hitzig's Jannæus the hero of this Psalm, they may at once fearlessly and truly protest against such a psychological impossibility; forming 'the inevitable conclusion, that a man may be a great expert in

IV. THE CRITICAL ARGUMENT: EARLY RELIGION OF ISRAEL.

grammar and philology, and yet strangely deficient

in literary taste and historical judgment.'1

In entering upon the general question, we must at the outset refer to an assumption, oftener con-

¹ The Authorship of the 110th Psalm; a Sermon preached before the University of Oxford, Dec. 6th, 1891, by the Rev. E. H. Gifford, D.D.

Antisupernatural assumptions. cealed than expressed, which would vitiate the whole argument. This postulate is the incredibility of the supernatural. Some critics-by no means all-make this their starting-point, and thus prejudice the discussion from the beginning. Miracle they hold to be impossible; and they will admit no other prophetic foresight than the wise but natural forecasting of events.¹ Such assumptions, it is evident, remove the whole discussion to another ground, and violate the first principles of any sound criticism.2 We have to investigate certain literary phenomena, to interpret them in the light of history, and according to the laws of the human mind. Whether natural or supernatural, the phenomena themselves must show: to deny the latter possibility is to beg the question altogether. Some of the most noted modern critics, especially in Germany and Holland, are avowedly antisupernaturalists; disallowing miracle, and repudiating all that we understand by divine inspiration. Their English followers have not as yet reached this point; and, it must be confessed, unite the most startling critical conclusions with great devoutness and with a high spiritual tone.

¹ See Sermon by the late Dean Burgon: Prophecy not Forecast.

² Dr. J. Robertson, not too caustically, writes, 'The critics object to the Biblical theory that it relies so much on the supernatural: the characteristic feature of their own is the unnatural. The Biblical theory says there was a course of

remains, however, to be seen whether true piety can lastingly consist with a rejection of that by which faith in its beginnings was nurtured and inspired.

Apart from this untenable assumption, the Three general considerations by which the later origin to be met. of the Psalter is maintained, may be classed under three heads.

First and chiefly. The Psalms are alleged to presuppose a state of religious belief, and a of spiritual religion in standard of devotional feeling, greatly in advance of what could have existed in the age of David, or for long afterwards.

I The late development Israel.

This position, taken by many modern critics, and sometimes assumed as unassailable, involves, in fact, a reconstruction of the Israelite history Reconstrucfrom the beginning. It is maintained that the history. patriarchal histories are largely mythical; that the Levitical legislation and its accompanying history are attributable not to Moses, but to some writer, or priestly guild, of the Exile, or an even later time; that Deuteronomy is a production of

history quite unprecedented, or certainly most extraordinary; the modern theory says that the history was nothing remarkable, but there was quite an unprecedented mode of imagining and writing it. There have to be postulated miracles of a literary and psychological kind, which contradict sound reason and experience as much as any of the physical miracles of the Old Testament transcend them.'- Baird Lecture, 1889, p. 477.

the age of Manasseh or Josiah; that the system

Conclusions to suit the theory.

Psalms 8 and 19. of Temple worship was not really constituted until after the return from Babylon: that the theology of Israel was a long development from the crude ideas of early ages; and that the growth and efflorescence of the national religion belong in part to the Persian, in part to the Grecian and Maccabæan eras. 1 Many conclusions are made to follow from these views-conclusions which, in themselves considered, would have been judged unworthy of serious notice. Thus, if a Psalm should deal with the Law, presupposing the existence of Deuteronomy or Leviticus, it must, according to the theory, irrespective of its other contents, be placed low down in the history. Nor only so: the Psalms of Creation come under a similar rule. Take for instance the Eighth and the Nineteenth, where 'the rich sweep of thought,' we are told by Canon Cheyne,2 'suggests the beneficial influences of the Exile': while he significantly adds: 'Many students will go further, and admit that if the priestly code is post-exile, those Psalms which allude to the first chapter of Genesis must be post-exile too.' The same critic

¹ See, for full statements of these views, Kuenen's Religion of Israel (Eng. Trans., 1874); with Wellhausen's Prolegomena to the History of Israel (1878) and his article on 'Israel' in the Encyclopædia Britannica. Prof. S. R. Driver's Literature of the Old Testament (1892) should also be examined.

² The Origin of the Psalter: 'Bampton Lectures,' 1889.

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considers that 'the Song of the Sun (Psa. xix.) was Psalm 19. provided after it was written, with a new conclusion, more in harmony with the intense Scripturism of the later post-exile period.' The conclusion is that David, knowing nothing of the first chapter of Genesis, could not thus have sung the wonders of Creation; nor could be have celebrated the glories of a Law that was not in existence for many centuries after his time. Such criticisms, it is plain, stand or fall with the reconstruction of the history: and those who have solid reason for believing that in the early Scriptures God spake by Moses will be unaffected by the critics' conclusions.

The truth is, that the existence of these sacred The Psalter songs is the great difficulty in the way of the to the new historical criticism. In the early days of the Israelite kingdom, it is maintained, there could not have been such an assured grasp on great and sacred truths, such fervour of holy feeling, such pure aspiration, such spiritual insight, and such delight in God, as are found in the first two Books of the Psalms, therefore they must belong to a later time; must, in fact, be removed from the period to which they have been hitherto ascribed, in order to make room for the theory!

The whole question is one of great range and importance; to discuss it in its wider aspects

would be beyond our present scope. Two general observations must suffice.

The early religion of Israel.

See p. 20.

1. The belief that the early religion of Israel was monotheistic and spiritual, a faith and worship congenial with what is best and deepest in the Psalms, entirely consists with the historical records. The Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles 2 do not, indeed, for the reason to be presently stated, express every sentiment that is found in the Psalter; but, to say the least, they contradict nothing that it contains. The prophetical books, again, strongly confirm our belief. The earliest of these are the prophecies of Joel,3 Amos, and Hosea; and these give abundant evidence of a long antecedent history, both literary and religious. The criticism which would assign the rise of the Israelite faith in its purer forms to the eighth century B.c. altogether fails to account for the prophets.

Witness of the prophets.

The fact of inspiration.

2. It must also be remembered that we are dealing, not only with the religious ideas of a whole people,

"We include Chronieles, notwithstanding modern critical assaults. See The Books of Chronieles in relation to the Pentateuch and the 'Higher Oriticism,' by Lord A. C. Hervey, D.D., Bishop of Bath and Wells.

³ See Chronological Table at the end of the Tract.

¹ The question has already been touched upon in this series of Tracts (No. 28, by the late Dr. Eustace R. Conder). For a more detailed and very powerful discussion of the subject, see Dr. James Robertson on The Early Religion of Israel, as set forth by Billical Writers and by Modern Critical Historians (Baird Lecture, 1889).

but with chosen minds possessed and inspired by the Spirit of God. If inspiration be denied, or explained away, we cannot account for the Psalms by anything we know of David's time, -or of Josiah's, or, indeed, of the Maccabæan or any other period of Israelite history. Grant inspiration, all is clear. 'David, being a prophet,' is Acts 2.30. St. Peter's sufficient explanation.

A striking illustration of the critical assumption Doctrine of of which we are speaking, occurs in reference life. to the doctrine of a future life, plainly recognised in several of the Psalms, as xvi., xvii. doctrine, it is laid down by the critics, came to the Jews, directly or indirectly, from Zoroaster, and therefore reached Palestine from Persia during the age that succeeded the conquests of Cyrus. Hence, if we find the doctrine in a Psalm, that Psalm is post-exilic, 'except, indeed, says Dr. Cheyne, upon the hypothesis of a heavendescended theology.' The phrase that we have italicised contains the gist of the whole matter. For 'heaven-descended theology' read Divine inspiration, and the concession is all we could desire.

This Psalms 16,

V. DAVID: IN THE HISTORY AND THE PSALTER.

A SECOND allegation is that the character of character of David, as depicted in the history, is altogether alleged to be inconsistent different from that portrayed in the Psalms.

II. The David with that in the Psalms.

¹ Origin of the Psalter, p. xxxi. The italics are ours.

The outer and the inner life.

1 Sam. 22-24.

Manysidedness of heroic souls.

That there are differences is indubitable. But it is requisite, in estimating these, first of all to bear in mind the difference between chronicle and song, between compendious narrative and lyrical ecstasy. In one we discern the outer, in the other the inner life. The brief and fragmentary records of a chequered life like that of David, it may be conceded, do not disclose to us the intellect and heart that appear in the Psalms. There are incidents in his earlier career in the light of which he might appear only the 'picturesque brigand' of modern critics. But such judgment would be inadequate, and therefore illusory. The wild adventures of Adullam, En-gedi, and the wilderness of Ziph, do not reveal to us the whole man. In a word, the Psalm carries us into depths of thought of which we have no glimpse in the history, because it is a Psalm. It is from the Psalter throughout, that we learn what were the faith and piety of ancient Israel when both were quickened to their highest mood. That the son of Jesse was possessed by such a faith, and characterised by such a piety, is in no wise inconsistent with the history, nay, is rather confirmed by it. Great emotional natures are many-sided. The strong, passionate soul of David reveals itself in dauntless heroism, in impulses by turns of anger and of generosity, nor less in startling sin and in overwhelming repentance. To study the externals of his history alone

will lead to a view of his character entirely insufficient. We crave some revelation of the spiritual being, which shall enable us to blend in thought these varying elements into one. Such revelation Glimpses of is contained in the Psalter: nor in this alone. The exquisite story of the friendship between 1 sam, 20, David and Jonathan; the episode of Keilah, and 18am. 23. kindred passages, afford flashes of insight into a nature most tender and devout. Such records as that in 2 Sam. vii. harmonise entirely with what is deepest and holiest in the Psalms: the Fiftyfirst Psalm, notwithstanding recent criticisms, may still be read as a commentary, profoundly true, pavid's on the affecting history in 2 Sam. xii.; and it must repentance. not be forgotten that the Eighteenth Psalm itself appears as a part of the history (2 Sam. xxii.).

David's inner life.

The attempt has been made to preserve the character of David as a poet, while denying him that of a sacred poet. His genius, it is said, was 'essen- David only tially secular.' The lovely elegy on the death of poet! Saul and Jonathan is quoted to show that his poetry, however pathetic and tender, was without any high religious strain. An allusion in Amos Amos 6.5 is further thought to prove that his musical genius was rather devoted to the service of luxury than to any lofty purpose. All this ignores the references that are made, not in the 'Chronicles' alone (sufficient as we should hold these to be), to the consecration of his gifts to the service of God.

In the Second Book of Samuel, we have not only, as has already been noted, the deeply religious Eighteenth Psalm, expressly attributed to him; but the description of the royal bard as the 'sweet psalmist of Israel,' who said-

> 'The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And His word was in my tongue.'

It is no doubt easy enough to say that these passages were interpolations, later additions, and the 2 Sam. 23. 2. like. But such assertions really mean nothing more than that the words stand in the way of a theory, and must therefore be got rid of at any cost. Is it so wonderful that a poet who commemorated human heroisms and affections with the lyric passion of the elegy, was also capable of loftier themes? And again, even though luxurious nobles in the days of Amos might fashion the musical accompaniments of their feasts after the pattern set by the monarch minstrel, how could this prove that David's harp was not tuned to the praise of God? 1 The degradation of the highest and holiest was no new thing in Israel; and the reference by the prophet to the instruments of David rather confirms than contradicts the testimony of the Chronicler that in the days of Hezekiah the song of Jehovah arose in His temple 'with the trumpets and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel.'

2 Chron. 29, 26, 27

¹ See 1 Chron, xxiii, 5: Neh, xii, 36,

VI. ALLUSIONS IN THE PSALMS: AUTHENTICITY OF THE TITLES.

THE third argument for the later origin of the III. Argu-Psalter is that the circumstances and events to which the Psalms allude can only be satisfactorily identified with those belonging to a period long after the age of David, in most instances to the post-exilic era, through the periods of Persian and of Greek domination, and down to the times of the Maccabees.

ment from the alleged allusions to the later history.

This argument can only be met in detail. It directly challenges the Titles prefixed to more than three-fourths of the Psalms, purporting, as every Bible-reader knows, to set forth their authorship, their occasion, their use in Temple service, and even the tunes to which they were to be sung. What value, if any, is to be attached to these titles? The question is interesting enough to demand a little detailed consideration.

The Titles to the Psalms;

Their

It is at once admitted that they are not a deci- Naturally to sive proof of authorship, date, or intent; but they may nevertheless afford a fair presumption regarding all three. For one thing: the existence of such prefixes might naturally have been expected.

be expected.

1 One hundred and sixteen Psalms have titles prefixed; thirty-four are without (called by the Rabbins 'orphan Psalms'). Of the 116, a hundred and one contain notes of authorship; 73 being attributed to David, 2 to Solomon, 12

It is quite in the style of Oriental poets thus to introduce their compositions. Thus, in Isaiah xxxviii. 9, the Prayer of Hezekiah has the superscription: 'A writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered from

his sickness; and in Habakkuk iii. 1, one of the noblest of prophetic songs is entitled, 'A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.'
The Eighteenth Psalm also appears in 2 Samuel

2 sam. 22.1. xxii. 1, with the same heading (substantially) that it bears in the Psalter. So far, all is in accord with what we might expect; and there is at least no *à priori* presumption against the authenticity of these superscriptions.

Their antiquity shown by their obscurity.

Further: they have many indications of considerable antiquity. Their irregularity and obscurity point to an origin much earlier than the latest editorship of the entire Psalter. Let the editors have been Ezra and Nehemiah, or, as some think, scribes of a subsequent date, it is reasonable to suppose that, had they affixed these titles, they would have done so on some uniform plan. On the contrary, we know how diverse and miscellaneous the superscriptions are: sometimes only

to Asaph, 11 to the sons of Korah, 1 each to Moses, Ethan, and Heman. Thirteen state the occasion of the Psalm, all of these being Davidic. Six others have historical notices prefixed to them in the LXX., some of which are very interesting.

the author's name, sometimes a musical direction, here and there a reference to some historical incident. It is in the first three out of the five Books into which the Psalter is divided, that the titles are chiefly found; afterwards they are only fitfully inserted—a fact inexplicable had the titles been of later editorship, intelligible enough had they formed an integral part of the Psalms. It may be added, with reference especially to the musical titles, that had they been prefixed, as sometimes alleged, for the service of the Second Temple, there is no apparent reason why they should have been omitted in the later Psalms. The titles, again, are so obscure and often so uninteresting, that we can hardly suppose them to have been added, in any stage of compilation, for the purpose of elucidating the meaning. So with their historical references. Had these been invented by the editors, they must surely have been made to correspond with the history. On the contrary, they introduce fresh difficulties. Thus, in the Seventh Psalm, who was 'Cush the Benjamite,' Psalm 7. whose words against David were so malignant? Of what 'house' again, was the Thirtieth Psalm Psalm 30, the dedication-song? What was the event recorded in the title to the Sixtieth Psalm, 'when Isalm 60 David strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote Edom in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand?

There is absolutely nothing in the history to elucidate this detailed and specific statement. Which, then, is the likelier supposition—that these Psalms commemorated facts unrecorded in the annals of David's reign (and in that eventful period there must have been many such), or that some too ingenious editor fitted the several legends to the Psalms, to the perplexity of succeeding generations? In such cases as this, the very difficulty is a presumption of truthfulness.¹

The LXX. version and the titles.

A notable and important point in connection with these superscriptions is that, when the Septuagint Version was made, their meaning had in great measure been already forgotten. This carries us to Alexandria, in Egypt, to the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the work having, probably, been begun about 280 B.c., although not completed for at least a century. Now the Seventy translators, or those of their number who undertook the Psalter, when they came to these titles, were at an absolute loss. Even so simple a phrase as that which we render 'To the Chief Musician,' or 'To the Precentor,' was a mystery to them. They can only guess at its meaning, rendering the phrase 'For Ever,' or 'To the End.'2 Such titles, again, as Shoshannim,' Lilies; or 'Jonath-elem-rechokim,' The Silent Dove among Strangers; or 'Aijeleth Shahar,' The

Perplexed renderings.

¹ It is a favourite canon in other fields of criticism: 'proclivi lectioni præstat ardua.'

² είς τὸ τέλος.

Hind of the Morning, puzzling enough to ourselves. were just as perplexing to the Alexandrian translators. How came these Jews in Egypt to have lost the traditional meaning of phrases in their own sacred books? Had the collections been of recent origin—had the titles dated only from the Greek or the Persian period in Jewish history—it seems impossible that no recollection of their significance should have survived. The sole adequate explanation of the fact is in the antiquity of the phrases, and in the people's entire change of circumstances. These superscriptions, for the most part occurring in the earlier books of the Psalter, came down, with the odes to which they are prefixed, to the Alexandrian Jews from a dim and distant past.

It is only fair to add that, with regard to this last argument, Professor Cheyne says, 'I do not myself feel the objection (to his theory of the later date) to be important.' 'The Jewish scribes,' he adds, 'may have forgotten the meaning of the titles, when the Temple with its music was reorganised, and the Psalter re-edited by Simon (the Maccabee).' Dr. Driver, too, in a letter

Answer by Prof. Cheyne.

¹ See Studia Biblica, Oxford, vol. 2, pp. 33-57, for a complete and very interesting view, by Mr. Neubauer, of the renderings of these titles by the Greek translators and in the Targums. 'From all these different expositions of the titles of the Psalms,' writes Mr. Neubauer, 'it is evident that the meaning of them was early lost.'

Answer by Dr. Driver.

to Professor Sanday, throws his authority into the same scale. 'I doubt greatly,' he says, 'whether much weight is to be attached to the ignorance of the Seventy. In all parts of their translation (which, of course, as its varying character shows, is the work of very different hands, and in all probability was only completed gradually) they are apt to stand aloof from the Palestinian tradition: they frequently show themselves to be unfamiliar, not only with uncommon or exceptional words, but even with those which one would have expected to be well known.' But these considerations appear to fail entirely in explaining how the Jews in Alexandria could have so completely lost the memory of a recent tradition.² It is not as though Palestine and Egypt were remote countries, without communication. Alexandria and Jerusalem were sufficiently near for intercourse, and there was no subject on which the scribes of the Temple and Ptolemy's translators were more likely to communicate with one another than the meaning of their sacred books. Does not Dr. Cheyne assume this constant communication when he supposes certain of the Psalms to commemorate the glories of Ptoleny Philadelphus? Undoubtedly, that the scribes should have forgotten the antique formulas of

Reply.

¹ The Oracles of God, p. 146.

² See Table of Dates, at the end of the Tract.

their fathers' days before the Babylonian captivity. would seem natural enough. Take, for instance, the Sixtieth Psalm, to which reference has already been made. The superscription to this Psalm is made by the Seventy quite hopelessly Psalm 60. unintelligible. We do not wonder at this, provided the Psalm had come down from ancient times. Yet Dr. Chevne assigns the Psalm to the year after the death of Judas Maccabæus, so that the Hebrew title and this Greek travesty of it would have been well-nigh contemporaneous! On the whole, with all respect to the high authority of the two distinguished professors named, we must still regard the ignorance of the Seventy translators as an important part of the cumulative argument for throwing back at least the earliest part of the Psalter to the very time to which it professes to belong.

A comparison sometimes instituted between the postscripts to St. Paul's Epistles and the superscriptions of the Psalms, is plainly fallacious. Comparison The cases are quite dissimilar. The postscripts are absent from the earliest Greek MSS.; the superscriptions exist in every edition of the Hebrew Bible. The arguments which prove some of the postscripts to be erroneous, are definite and indisputable; against the superscriptions there is no such evidence. The two cases must therefore, be separately considered. All that the

with postscripts to the

comparison can prove is that the mere fact of a note occurring in our present text of Scripture does not demonstrate its authenticity. This is indubitable, but it is nothing to the purpose. The titles of the Psalms are neither supported nor discredited by the supposed parallel.

The proof is presump-

The notes of authorship cannot, indeed, as will be hereafter shown, be pressed as decisive. All that we are concerned to maintain is, that they are proof presumptive, when no stronger proof exists on the other side. They hold the field, until sufficient cause against them can be shown. For their corroboration, or the reverse, the contents of the Psalms themselves need to be taken into account and carefully examined. This is the undoubted function of criticism; and its methods, soberly applied, will, we are persuaded, be found to sustain the uniform Jewish national tradition, and the belief of the Universal Church, that the chief author of these Divine odes was David, the 'sweet Psalmist of Israel.'

^{1 &#}x27;A sober criticism will allow the titles a certain weight, as giving, in general at least, some information as to the source from which the Psalms were derived, which is not to be rejected without good reason.'—Professor Kirkpatrick: Cambridge Bible, The Psalms, p. xxx. The Professor holds that the title 'of David' (Heb. l'David) may indicate the collection from which the several Psalms were taken, 'the Davidic collection,' to which David was the most eminent contributor, though the works of other poets may have been included. There is a modern analogy to this in 'Heber's Hymns.'

It is not intended, nor is it necessary, to main- Possible tain that all the Davidic superscriptions are authentic. The scribes, in copying and transmitting the Psalms, would, in all probability, make many mistakes. Having a basis to go upon in the mass of genuine superscriptions, they would here and there prefix titles to anonymous Psalms, in clear violation of the facts of the case, just as the Septuagint translators did in a yet later day.1 It is the business of criticism to trace such instances, and to separate, as far as possible, the erroneous from the true. Instances cannot here Internal be given in detail; but two typical cases may be taken. Psalm exxii., the third Song of Degrees, Psalm 122. is attributed in the Hebrew title to David:

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

Now we are far from alleging, with some critics, that a Psalm which speaks of the 'house' of Jehovah is necessarily later than David's time. Such critics deny to the royal Psalmist the Twenty- The 'House of Jehovah,' third Psalm, because of its concluding sentence: 'I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' Professor Cheyne, we are bound to say, has not pressed this argument, although he does not hold David to have been the author of Psalm xxiii.:

The LXX. appears to attribute Psa. cxxxvii.—'By the rivers of Babylon,'-to David. To David, also, it assigns xxxiii., xliii., lxvii., lxxi., xci., xciii.-xcix., and civ.

he sees, at least, that 'the house of Jehovah' may have a wider meaning than that of the Temple, whether of Solomon or of Zerubbabel.¹ But apart from this, it seems difficult to suppose David to have written exxii. 5: 'There are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.' The stanza suggests a later day, when there had already been successors in David's royal line; and therefore we cannot resist the criticism which holds the title in this instance, probably to have been prefixed in error.

Psalm 139

The other instance to which we would advert is the Hundred-and-thirty-ninth Psalm — that sublime meditation on the omniscience of God: 'O Jehovah, Thou hast searched me, and known me.' In this Psalm, as Hebrew experts all agree, there are Aramæan words and forms which appear to betoken an exilic or post-exilic date. On philological grounds, therefore, it seems probable that the Davidic authorship of this Psalm must, notwithstanding its title in the Hebrew, be surrendered.

Evidence from language.

> Here and there, again, the title may appear more or less inconsistent with some historical or personal allusion of the Psalm. Such instances must be severally considered; and, to return for a moment to Psalm li., it may be asked whether the

Allusions in the Psalms.

¹ See 2 Sam xii, 20: 'He came into the house of the Lord and worshipped' after his sin.

prayer at the end, that Jehovah would 'build the Psalm 51. walls of Jerusalem,' is not inconsistent with the ascription of the Psalm to David. Does not the prayer imply a time when the walls had been destroyed and the Temple lay in ruins—that is, the time of the Babylonian captivity? In answer, we might say that the verses speak not of 're-building,' but simply of building; and it was David's work to complete the city as well as to prepare for the services of the altar. Or, with many of the best expositors, we may regard the Psalmist's appeal as denoting his abandonment of all earthly defences: 'Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.' Then would sacrifice, otherwise so futile (ver. 16), be again well pleasing to God. But should such explanations be unsatisfactory, there is nothing improbable in the view that these last two verses were a liturgical addition by some subsequent editor. 1 Such additions were not uncommon or unnatural, in adapting a Psalm for public worship; and we may refer them to a later time without for a moment doubting the rest of the Psalm to be by David.

Nor does it at all affect the main conclusion, Points of biography that we are often unable to note the precise point sometimes of the biography to which the prayer or the thanksgiving may relate. Sometimes, indeed,

¹ See Bishop Perowne on the passage.

Psalms 52, 55, etc.

Psalm 34.

there can be little reasonable doubt; at others, there is room for question. The Psalmist may be speaking of his persecution by Saul, or of Absalom's rebellion. The foe may be Doeg or Ahithophel. It is character rather than incident that is disclosed. It may be, again, that when an incident is actually mentioned, it seems hardly to accord with the strain. The Thirty-fourth Psalm, for instance, is entitled 'A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech (i.e. Achish), who drove him away, and he departed.' The strange, half-grotesque, half-melancholy story is told in the twenty-first chapter of the First Book of Samuel. David. pretending to be insane, was expelled from Gath, and after imminent peril found himself once more in safety. Now, say our critics, is it conceivable that in such circumstances a man who had just been deporting himself as a lunatic should break into grateful song?—

> I will bless Jehovah at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in Jehovah; The humble shall hear thereof and be glad—

proceeding then to descant upon the blessedness of Divine protection, and to utter lessons of purity and trust? There is a superficial incongruity, it must be confessed—so manifest, may we not add—that no editor or inventor, seeking in the history

an occasion for the Psalm, would have been in the least likely to select this point in David's biography. It is hard to account for the super- see p. 26, note 1. scription, except by supposing it authentic. Then, perhaps, on a deeper view, it may appear not so wonderful that, when the imperilled fugitive found himself again at liberty, his elastic spirit should break into the utterance of thankfulness, and celebrate in measured strains 1 the wonders of God's providence and care.

Thus, the very difficulties of the case shape themselves into arguments for the Church's old belief. So with many another Psalm to which similar objections have been raised.2 The poetical and the historical descriptions of the same event, it is reasonable to suppose, would be seen to be in full accord, were all the facts before us. As it is, it is surely more reasonable to suppose that the Psalm supplements the brief record from another point of view, than that some later editor prefixed without authority or even plausibility an inapplicable title!

VII. DIRECT ARGUMENT FOR THE DAVIDIC AUTHORSHIP.

On the positive side of the argument, it may be fairly urged, without placing any undue

¹ The Psalm is alphabetic.

² See a long and detailed list in Driver's Introd. to Literature of Old Testament, pp. 353-355.

Impossibility of imposing the Psalter upon the nation. stress upon tradition, that it is hardly possible to account for the long, uniform, persistent belief of the whole Jewish nation in the Davidic origin of their Psalter, excepting upon the hypothesis of its truth.

Is it, we may ask, conceivable that the conviction of David's work and calling should have taken possession of an entire people, becoming part of their national life, blending with all their highest aspirations, and giving form and tone to their worship for centuries, unless on the supposition of its reality? How could all Israel have been led to believe that these compositions, as it is alleged, of the post-exilic and Maccabæan ages were the veritable songs that had cheered their fathers through the vicissitudes of the nation's history, and had resounded from generation to generation in the Temple built by Solomon? 'Of course,' writes Dr. Cheyne (Bampton Lectures, p. 458), 'the Egyptian Jewish community received no information on the subject of Maccabæan Psalms. It was not the interest of the Jerusalem editors to publish the recent origin of a portion of the Psalms.'

Alleged concealment by the editors.

Was ever such delusion palmed upon a people? The ancient lyrics of a nation are among its most tenacious and permanent forms of literature. Are we to suppose that the Psalms, at the time of their composition, brought with them the tradition of

antiquity, and that the tradition was universally accepted? There must have been contempor- National aries and companions of the supposed anonymous of the Psalter, poets, who well knew the nature of their work, and knew also that these were connecting their own effusions with the great name of Israel's greatest king. How came it to pass that all this was calmly permitted: and that Israel was made to believe these songs of yesterday to have celebrated Jehovah's mercies in the past; to have recorded the sorrows, trials and victories of their forefathers: to have crossed the dismal years of the Captivity; and to have borne to themselves, from generations long past, the burden of thankfulness and hope? Supposed national It would be hard enough to believe that a pious acceptance of modern Maccabee should offer to the people his own ancient. psalm as a veritable Psalm of David; but that the people should all unquestioningly take him at his word, and henceforth enshrine the psalm in their affections as a precious memorial of 'the man after God's own heart,' transcends all bounds of reasonable belief. 'It is difficult,' writes the late Canon Liddon, 'to understand how even in an uncivilized age a body of men like the Jewish Canon scribes and Rabbins could have come to think that a composition was a thousand years old, if it was in reality less than two hundred. People in

acceptance

Liddon.

¹ The Maccabean tradition was that Nehemiah collected the writings of David with the other Scriptures. See 2 Macc. ii. 13.

England would have to be very uneducated indeed, in order to imagine that a poem written in the days of Queen Anne was really of the days of Alfred the Great.'

We conclude, then, from the Psalms themselves, and from their history, that the traditions, the instinct, the reverence of the ancient and modern Church, have not been mistaken; and that the chequered career, the deep experiences and the poetic soul of David have given to the people of God through successive generations the language of their holiest emotions, of their saddest penitence and of their most exalted praise.

Personality of tone.

The intense personality of the tone in many of the Psalms is another fact which enables us to estimate their authorship. It is significant that the advocates of the later date are compelled to minimise or altogether deny this personal reference. These Psalms, it is said, are the voice of the Church, the nation, not of the individual. The criticism is very bold and thorough-going. Even the Thirty-second Psalm, according to Canon Cheyne, is a 'Church Psalm,' expressing by the mouth of some unnamed prophet the contrition of a whole people. To test this theory requires no apparatus of critical knowledge. It is not Hebrew lore, but knowledge of the human heart which the

Theory of 'Church Psalms.'

student needs; and if, in the pathetic words of Psalm 32. this Psalm, the cry of the individual conscience is not recognised, we venture to say the psychological insight of the critic is at fault:

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old Through my roaring all the day long.

I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, And mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions with Jehovah, And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.

Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

What words could more accurately express the emotions of the penitent, forgiven soul-of one who had sinned like David, and like David had been pardoned? It is almost melancholy to see how, missing all this, the critic can coolly postpone the date of the Psalm by considerations such as the following: 'Note, especially, the contrite Another tone, and the idea of God as an educator, both of which are characteristic of the post-exile author of the speeches of Elihu (Job xxxiii. 14-30).'1

Or take the Fifty-first Psalm, in which all ages Psalm 51. have read the cry of David's inmost soul in the remembrance of his great transgression. This also, we are now told, is a 'Church Psalm.'

¹ Bampton Lectures, p. 249.

'The original writer spoke in the name of the Church;' but the editor may not have felt the appropriateness of the Psalm as a General Confession, and therefore 'set it on one side, as it were, for great sinners like David.' The criticism is sustained by a reference to the words 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.' The words, Dr. Cheyne suggests, were overlooked when 'the editor of Psalm li. explained it of David's sin with Bathsheba.' It is precisely here that we would join issue. Perhaps there could be no better test of the critic's true insight than the explanation of those most solemn words. How, asks one, could David have confessed that his sin was against God only? Had he not sinned against Uriah, against Bathsheba herself, against the whole people of Israel, against his own soul? Yes, another may well reply-David had so sinned; but it is characteristic of the profoundest penitence to regard the sin against God -against infinite righteousness and love - as outweighing and absorbing every other thought connected with the transgression. 'In the deepest spiritual experience we are conscious of but two existences-God and our own soul.' To decide between these contrasted expositions does not require the aid of Hebrew erudition or historic lore; and we should be inclined to measure the discernment of the critic by his ability to under-

Sin 'against God only.' stand how David, in the depth of his contrition, ignoring for the moment all other aspects of his guilt, could cry to God: 'My sin, O Lord, is against Thee alone!'

VIII. CONFLICTING VIEWS OF CRITICS.

What views, it may be asked, is it proposed to substitute for the old opinion? It is when we come to the constructive work of the criticism we are considering, that its ineffectiveness most clearly

appears.

To a great extent, it issues in mere conjecture; Criticism depending, not, as with the exact sciences, upon the discovery of new phenomena or the construction of larger generalizations, but upon the acuteness and insight of the individual theorist. One guess is continually superseding another; and in the absence of sound and recognised canons of judgment, the divergence becomes hopeless. Once the ultimate point of rationalistic criticism seemed to be reached by Ewald; and it was strange to find that he could allow to David only sixteen or seventeen Psalms; 1 but these were at any rate held as 'unquestionably' his. Here is what the great critic says: 'There is a series of Psalms, of Ewald on the Davidic peculiarly powerful genius, and unique in the elevation of their sentiment, which, according to the

and conjecture.

¹ Psalms xi., vii, xxiv. 7-10, xxiv. 1-6, xv., ci., xxix., xix. 1-6, viii., ex., lx. 8-11, xviii., xxxii., iii., iv., ii., exliv. 12-15.

coincidence of all indications, can spring from no other and no less a poet than David himself. If we look for a moment away from these songs to the whole Psalter, it cannot be doubtful from the other sources what manner of man David was in

his innermost being as man and as poet.' But other critics have succeeded Ewald; and now Canon Cheyne follows some of the later Dutch and German schools in getting rid of David almost or altogether. 'From the point of view,' he writes, 'of the history of art, not less than from that of the history of religion, the supposition that we have Davidic psalms presents insuperable difficulties. Even the Eighteenth Psalm must, in spite of the contrary opinion of Ewald, be transferred to a later poet than David.' If it is

Davidic Psalms all disallowed by modern critics.

Psalm 18. and 2 Sam. 22.

It will be instructive to follow this pathway of critical conjecture a little further. The Seventy-

objected that in the Second Book of Samuel it is expressly stated that this Psalm was David's composition, Professor Cheyne can only reply that this proves the poem to have been conjecturally ascribed to the idealized David, not long before the Exile, just as the Seventy-second Psalm was assigned by a still later student to the idealized

Solomon.

¹ Commentary on the Psalms; Eng. ed., vol. i, p. 64.

² Bampton Lectures, p. 193.

second Psalm has just been mentioned—the grand Psalm 72. missionary ode familiar to all. That ode has unquestionably its groundwork in Hebrew history: its title attributes it to Solomon; 1 it is a lovely picture of the kingdom of that prince of peace, whose reign would so far prefigure that of the Messiah. This, at least, is the popular, traditional view; but Ewald will hardly allow it. That the Psalm expresses the aspirations of the chosen people on the accession of a new ruler, and that it Ewald's points to Messianic times, is to him indubitable. He thinks, however, that 'considering the circumstances of the kingdom at David's death, the Psalm cannot refer to Solomon, but probably to a later successor of David, perhaps Josiah, or, if possible, one still later.' He then adds: 'Who the king was can now be stated with as little positiveness as the name of the poet; but nothing would be more perverse than for us to think of a foreign or heathen king, on the ground that the song belongs wholly to later times. On the contrary, the picture of the boundaries to be desired (vers. 8, 9), and not merely this, but also every other sign in the song, point to a Davidic king.' 2 We now turn to Hitzig, and to Canon Cheyne, Hitzig and who follows the Heidelberg professor in referring

^{1 &#}x27;For Solomon,' in the Authorised version: 'of Solomon,' correctly, in the Revised.

² Commentary, vol. i, p. 335.

this Psalm to Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt. The latter critic wishes, indeed, that he could have applied it to Darius Hystaspis, some 250 years earlier; but this he unfortunately finds impracticable, and so rests in Ptolemy Philadelphus. Nothing would be more perverse, says Ewald, in the passage just quoted, 'than to think of a foreign or a heathen king.' The perversity repudiated at Göttingen becomes reasonable conjecture at Oxford!

Psalm 45.

After this, it is not wonderful to find this same Ptolemy Philadelphus represented as the hero of that exquisite marriage-song, the Forty-fifth Psalm. On this Psalm, and its immediate occasion, the critics had been unusually discordant. One had interpreted it of the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel; for had not Ahab built an 'ivory palace': and is it not written in the Psalm: 'The daughter of Tyre shall be there?' Another had applied it to Jeroboam the Second and his (unknown) bride; while a third had understood it of Jehoram and Athaliah. But now Dr. Cheyne asks: 'To whom so well as to the most condescending, generous, and literary of the Ptolemies, do the first two verses of this Hebrew song apply? And can we think of any ruler of the Jews between Solomon and Ptolemy Philadelphus, to whom the words would be more fitly addressed: "Grace (a Greek would have said

Ptolemy Philadelphus. Peitho) is poured into thy lips?"' Such is the interpretation of the glorious ode in which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews finds prophetic description of the Son of God! Ptolemy Philadelphus! We know something of what this king's marriage-history really was. Canon Rawlinson shall tell us: 'Ptolemy divorced his first wife Arsinoë, the daughter of Lysimachus, and banished her to Coptos in Upper Egypt in order that he might contract an incestuous marriage with his full sister Arsinoë, who had been already married to his half-brother Keraunus.' Verily:-

My heart overfloweth with a goodly matter: I speak the things which I have made touching the king!

Accordingly, Dr. Cheyns admits that 'Philadelphus violates the highest ideal of marriage more conspicuously than some of the better Oriental monarchs.' But, when these Psalms were written, the Professor charitably suggests, 'the darker shades of that king's character had not come out.' Possibly not; but after these 'shades' had 'come out,' how came this Psalmand the Seventy-second—to be included in the collection as memorials of such a king?

But our critics summon us from Alexandria to Alleged Maccabacan Jerusalem, and from the Ptolemies to the Macca-Psalms. bees; bidding us discern in this yet later age the genesis of many a Psalm. Now, it is a fair

question whether some of the Psalms depicting the persecution of the faithful, amid national disaster and ruin, may not be Maccabæan. Even Calvin ascribed the Forty-fourth Psalm to that period: while the Seventy-fourth also, the Seventy-seventh, and perhaps the Seventy-ninth and Eighty-third, might appropriately describe that time of bitter calamity. And yet these Psalms might all have originated in other periods of the history, although the Maccabæan persecutions would give to them a new meaning and power. Modern trials and sorrows find utterance in many strains of olden times. Thus the Fortysixth has often been called 'Luther's Psalm,' because the modern conflict gave new meaning to the ancient words. But with regard to the mass of the Psalms attributed by critics like Reuss 1 to the Maccabæan era, it may be remarked that the ascription to this period of the spiritual piety, as well as the lyrical fervour, by which these Psalms are characterised, has no warrant whatever in the historic record. To imagine a race of Psalmists

Adaptation of ancient Psalms to later times.

¹ Psalms 44, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 62, 64, 71, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 83, 86, 88, 89, 90, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 115, 116, 118, 132, 138, 140, 142, 143, 144, 148, 149.

Canon Cheyne's list is as follows: 20, 21, 33, 44, 60, 61, 63, 74, 79, 83, 101, 108, 115, 116, 117, 118, 135, 136, 137, 138, (145, 146, 147?), 148, 149, 150. The twelve Psalms common to both lists are indicated by darker figures. What could more expressively show the uncertainty of the critical canons which from the same data lead to such different conclusions?

as existing at that time, all anonymous, capable of such exalted flights of sacred emotion and thrilling song, is a demand without evidence on simple credulity. The Apocryphal books throw instructive light on the character of the period. The age was essentially imitative, the glow of The inspiration was past. Zeal was at its height; age. there were great heroisms; a lofty enthusiasm was not unknown; but there are no signs of genius or literary power, such as were capable of producing such a series of Divine odes. The bitter lament 1 Macc. 4. of the people, in fact, is that no prophet was 14.41. among them. If we would note, in sharpest contrast, the difference between what is inspired and what is merely an echo, we may compare the so-named 'Psalms of Solomon,' which belong to The the first or second century B.C., with those that we 'Psalms of the still will call the Psalms of David. The distance Pharisees, is wide as that between earth and heaven!

Maccabæan

so-called Solomon.'

IX. WITNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: PSA. CX.

'ALL things,' said the risen Saviour, 'must be Luke 24.44. fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.' Now, even granting that by 'the Psalms' in this declaration He intended that whole division of ancient Scripture of which the Psalms was the principal portion, it is certain that to this particular Book He and His apostles continually

Isa. 55, 3.

Acts 13. 34.

appealed, as containing direct and divinelyinspired foreshadowings of His person, work and reign. The 'sure mercies of David' were the hope of the world. The 'kingdom of David' was to be the rule of the Christ over redeemed humanity; the dedication of the Psalmist to his life's work was the type of His whose motto was.

'Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God, yea, Thy law is within My heart.' Nor have we only the

type of consecration and the pledge of royalty:

Psalm 40.

Heb. 10. 9.

Psalm 22, 1.

Matt. 27. 46.

Acts 2. 30, 31, R.V.

the suffering Messiah appears in the profoundly pathetic strains of the Psalm quoted by Himself upon the Cross, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!' But out of death comes resurrection. David 'being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins He would set one upon his throne, he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.' Thus throughout these songs of the past there was a divine purpose, pointing to the suffering, triumphant, reigning Saviour, and turning the sorrows and victories of 'the man after God's own heart,' into one long type and prophecy of Him who should come to reign as the world's Redeemer.

Psalm 110.

There is one Psalm of which the interpretation as given by our Lord Himself so directly meets much modern criticism, that it cannot be passed over. As all Bible students know, one of the Psalms ascribed to the Maccabæan age is the Hundredand-tenth:

> The Oracle of Jehovah unto my lord: Sit thou on my right hand Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The monstrous suggestion of Hitzig, that the See p. 13. Psalm refers to Alexander Jannæus, has already been noted: according to Prof. Cheyne the Psalm is 'a glorification of Simon the Maccabee.' This Referred to Simon was to 'sit on Jehovah's right hand;' and Maccabeus. was 'made a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.'

Simon was, no doubt, a noble and heroic ruler —very different from Jannæus. But when he is made the hero of the Psalm, it might be sufficient, apart from the more serious considerations that we must advance, to observe, in the first place, that he was not a crowned 'king,' but a tributary Nota 'king.' vassal of the kings of Syria; and, secondly, that he was not 'a priest after the order of Melchizedek,' Not 'after the order of but distinctly after the order of Aaron. We need Melchinot even quote the Epistle to the Hebrews to show that the whole point of the description is lost by its application to one like Simon of regular priestly descent.

But, while these considerations appear of them-

¹ See Dr. Gifford's Sermon, already quoted: p. 9.

Christ's express declaration. selves conclusive, there are others in reserve which we cannot consent to surrender. Our Lord Himself, in one of the most solemn moments of His life, expressly confirmed the reference of this 110th Psalm to His own person and kingdom; and that by David. All three of the Synoptic Gospels contain, although in slightly differing phrases, His significant words. Manifestly, His purpose was to declare a most important truth concerning Himself. His was no mere wordfencing with the Pharisees. He could hardly have made a more solemn announcement of His rightful claim as King of kings and Lord of lords. We cite the passages from the Revised Version.

Matthew xxii. 41-45.

Now while the Pharises were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord, saying,

The Lord said unto my Lord,

Sit Thou on my right hand,

Till I put Thine enemies underneath Thyfeet?

If David then calleth Him Lord, how is He his son?

Mark xii. 35-37.

And Jesus answered and said, as He taught in the Temple, How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right

hand,
Till I make Thine enemies the footstool
of Thy feet.

David himself calleth Him Lord; and whence is He his son?

Luke xx. 41-44.

And He said unto them, How say they that the Christ is David'sson? For David himself saith in the book of Psalms.

The Lord said unto my Lord.

Lord,
Sit Thou on my right
hand,
Till I make Thine ene-

ill I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.

David therefore calleth Him Lord, and how is He his son?

His authority as Teacher. Now, if our Lord, in quoting these words, did not know them to be David's, or if He mistakenly attributed them to the royal Psalmist, what becomes of His authority as an interpreter of Old

Testament Scripture? It is alleged that in general He might speak of Scripture books by their popular names, intimating nothing on His own authority as to their authorship.1 But this, even if true, is nothing to the purpose here. Our Lord's whole argument rests upon the authorship. Had it been open to any Pharisee wiser than the rest to reply: But the Psalm is not David's, our Lord would have been silenced in this assertion of His supreme claim. And if it was not open to the Pharisee thus to reply, is it open to any of us? The Holy Spirit was upon Jesus Christ—not, it is said, 'to enable Him to 'Literary criticism', decide questions of literary criticism.' But this is and essential not a question of literary criticism. It belongs to the whole purpose of God with regard to the revelation and establishment of His kingdom: a purpose in which, our Lord expressly teaches, the kingly life and prophetic utterances of David had their appointed place. The Saviour's testimony we must accept without qualification or reserve: and in His name must resist the criticism which would depose this Book of Psalms from the place which the reverence and love of all the Christian ages have assigned to it, not only in the utterance of all that is deepest in souls in communion with

¹ So in Heb. iv. 7, 'David' is probably used as a synonym for the Psalter, without determining anything as to the authorship of the Psalm quoted (xcv.)

God, but in the unfolding of His highest purposes and the preparation of the Messiah's everlasting kingdom.¹

X. PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION.

WE have been concerned to give reasons for accepting the ancient belief of the Church concerning the Psalter, not only because of the literary and historical interest of the topic, but because, as intimated at the outset, and as shown throughout the discussion, it has important bearings upon Christian thought and life. It cannot be without serious loss that we dislocate the Scriptures, resolving its history into legend, explaining away its prophecies, and discrediting, because of our presumed clearer light, the plain declarations of our Lord. We are dealing with no less a theme than the method by which God has revealed Himself to man. If Christ is Saviour, then was He the promised Saviour, prefigured and predicted through a long and pre-ordained history. Discredit this, and we shall go near to discredit Scripture teaching altogether, and faith will have lost its old resting-place in the inspired Word.

Bearing of the question on Christian life.

The promised Saviour.

Very significant and affecting are the endeavours made in our day to re-awaken the spirit of faith in

¹ On the whole subject, see Christus Comprobator, by Bishop Ellicott.

those whom criticism has driven from the ancient The new security. As we have already remarked, the tone and the old fervour. of British scholars who have thus renounced the formerly accepted beliefs, is in a great measure reverent and devout. They endeavour to persuade their followers that the same, or even greater incentives to faith and piety may be found in the Bible which their criticism would leave to the Church, as in that which former generations have studied with reverent love. The example of their more thoroughgoing predecessors in Holland and Germany may well make them pause. Besides, we may ask, how Early was it that our critics themselves were first led to the critics. God? Was it not through the old fashion of teaching and accepting the Scriptures? The lessons learned in childhood from their mothers, or in the days of their ardent youth from pastors or trusted teachers, were acquired in the simplicity of trust. Further research, they say, has destroyed the old implicit belief, but the moral and spiritual effects remain. How? but as a lasting result of those repudiated lessons. But what of the next generation? If the critical conclusions of which we have spoken be true, it must be declared to old and young by mothers, by Sunday-school Results in teachers, by ministers of the Gospel, that the Bible is not what our fathers have thought it to be. Will faith and reverence stand the wrench? It may be too early yet to answer the question: we

the coming generation. trust that the need for such answer will never arise. The issues at stake are tremendous; and it will be a dark day for the Church of Christ, should 'the reconstruction of the Old Testament history' prove the destruction of the New Testament faith.

NOTE I .- On Chronology.

To assist the reader in following the argument of the Tract, the following (approximate) dates are given:—

Accession of David	••••	B.C.	1032	
Dedication of Solomon's Temple		,,	981	
Joel, the earliest of the Jewish prophets		,,	790-76c	
Discovery of 'the Law' by Hilkiah	••••	,,	640	
The Babylonian Captivity	****	,,	606-536	
Dedication of the Second Temple	* * * *	,,	516	
Judæa under the successors of Alexander	••••	,,	320	
The "Septuagint" commenced at Alexan	dria	,,	280	
Oppression by Antiochus Epiphanes		,,	170	
Accession of Judas Maccabæus	****	99	166	
Re-dedication of the Temple	****	,,	165	
Accession of Simon Maccabæus	••••	,,	143	
Accession of Alexander Jannæus	****	,,	104	

Note 2.—The Five Books of the Psalter.

Ir may be convenient here to remind the reader of the fivefold division of the Psalms, as shown in the Revised Version and the best modern editions of the Bible:—

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Book i. Psalms I - 4I: 37 attributed to David.

ii. ,, 42 - 72: 18 ,, ,,

iii. ,, 73 - 89: I ,, ,,

iv ,, 90 - 106: 2 ,, ,,

v. ,, 107 - 150: 15 ,, ,,
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See The Book of Psalms, R.T.S., Introduction.



CHRIST'S DOCTRINE

OF

PRAYER.

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF

'THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ITS HISTORICAL, DOCTRINAL,

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS.'



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
56 PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

Argument of the Tract.

Christ suggesting to the Pharisees the 'Experimental Method': its three stages,—facts, hypothesis, experiment. Christianity amenable to this method—based on facts, its doctrines are the happiest hypotheses, and they may be verified by experience and experiment. Applicable to Doctrine of Prayer.

I. THE FACTS. A Fact may appeal to consciousness, and not to sense-perception; the facts on which Christ based His view of Prayer were:—(1) A perfect Heavenly Father behind Nature, and speaking through it. (2) The existence of Prayer in Nature. (3) The Prayer-instinct in man as man.

II. THE DOCTRINE. Mistaken or inadequate views:—
(1) Prayer is a mistake. (2) Prayer is simply to bring the human will round to the Divine. (3) May obtain spiritual, but not temporal blessings. (4) Prayer is answered, but by a miracle.

Christ's Doctrine. Analysis of it. I. An omniscient Heavenly Father may be expected to anticipate the needs of His children. II. He will not rule Himself out of either work or fellowship. III. Prayer has been, and can be, included in His fore-ordination of all things. IV. Prayer should be brief and confiding. v. Prayer should be patient and importunate.

III. VERIFICATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND EXPERIMENT (1) Experience. Prayerful Christ. Men of God. Experience of the individual believer. (2) Experiment. A Prayer-guage proposed. How inapplicable. Vitiated by apathy. Conditions impossible. Possible experiment. But it must begin with pardon, and go on to the new world which the new nature discovers. Nature new. Healing new. Prayer new. Conclusion.

CHRIST'S DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

- softere

HEN the Pharisees of our Lord's time Introhad reached the strange conclusion that He had 'a devil,' and deserved to be killed, He recommended them to adopt

another method, and they would judge more wisely. The method they had been pursuing was that of discussion, of debate, of logic-chopping, and of hair-splitting. The Jewish Rabbins thought that every needful discovery could be reached by deduction; that if they discussed God's will in all its length and breadth, they would know Divine doctrine. Yet, as a matter of fact, the lawyers and theologians of the time argued themselves into the conclusion that this peerless Philanthropist, Jesus Christ, ought to be put to death, because He would not fulfil their idea of Messiahship. The fact is that if we only set ourselves doggedly to do it, we can argue ourselves into anything. Nothing is too absurd, nothing is too diabolical, as human history shows, to be reached by argument.

Accordingly we find Christ in His Divine wisdom suggesting to His enemies a better method.

Christ recommends the experimental method.

'If any man,' He said, 'will ("willeth to," R.V.) do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself' (John vii. 17). If, instead of eternally discussing the Divine will, they would set about doing it, they would reach right conclusions about the Divine doctrine. Through experience, rather than through discussion; through induction, rather than through deduction; through obedience, rather than through debate, Christian doctrine was to be appreciated. In other words, Jesus Christ recommended to His contemporaries the 'experimental method.' His appeal was to experience. He anticipated Bacon when He thus staked Divine doctrine upon the experiences of the soul; He anticipated Neander when He thus recommended them to reach theology through the heart.

Now, in a scientific age like ours, there is a distinct advantage if we can apply to Christian doctrine the experimental method. This method, since it was emphasized by Bacon, has very largely made the modern world. It may be summarized as consisting of three stages: first, the collection of all available *facts* pertaining to the subject in hand; secondly, the tentative explanation of these facts by some happy *hypothesis*; and thirdly, the verification of the hypothesis by *experiment*. Facts are thus seen to be the substantial foundation; hypothesis is the ideal structure built upon them;

Facts, hypotheses, experiment, the three stages in the experimental method. and experiment is the test to which the structure is subjected, to see if it will really stand. Now, Christianity courts exactly such treatment. It professes to be an historic, as distinguished from a merely speculative religion. It bases itself on facts of Nature and on facts of History, which can be tested by the canons of science and of historical These foundation facts it covers and interprets by a series of most happy hypotheses, although in its inquiries it uses the word doctrines 'Doctrines' rather than 'hypotheses.' Then it appeals to ex- of the 'hypotheses.' perience, and in many cases to experiment, in confirmation of the doctrines. To modern inquirers such a line of investigation should prove welcome.

of the term

Believing, then, that Christ has anticipated the modern method and the modern spirit, we propose in the present Tract to exhibit His doctrine or philosophy of Prayer, persuaded that it meets fairly all modern objections, and is destined, as founded upon facts, to stand. Those who are believers in Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour, would consider His Divine command to pray sufficient; but as, for the sake of a wider circle, our treatment of the subject is to be by the experimental method, the order of our thought will be: I. The Facts on which Christ bases His doctrine of Prayer; II. His Doctrine; and III. The Experience by which His doctrine may be verified.

I. THE FACTS.

And here it will be well to give clearness to our thinking by pointing out what a fact really is. There are some people now-a-days so immersed in physical science and its conceptions, as to seem to think that a fact is something which must either be seen, or heard, or touched, or smelt, or tasted. The five senses are, they think, the only referees to decide as to fact and fiction. But there are facts, and very serious ones, which escape our senses altogether. Remorse is a fact; and yet nobody ever saw, or heard, or handled, or smelt, or tasted, with the bodily organs, remorse; it gives the five referees the slip; and yet it is there, a stubborn, serious fact all the same. We are bound consequently in any fair investigation to recognise as facts what appeal to the consciousness, as well as what appeal to sense-perception.1

1. When we come, then, to *Christ's* deliverances on the subject of Prayer, we are confronted by a first, and, as we might call it, a basal fact of a perfect Heavenly Father behind the veil of Nature, and speaking to us through it. 'No man hath seen God at any time' (John i. 18). He is

1. The Heavenly Father behind Nature.

A fact

¹ Cf. Doumergue's La Méthode Experimentale et le Christianisme, an address delivered in connection with the Paris Exposition of 1878, and published in La Vérité Chrétienne et le Doute Moderne; also Dr. Angus' Present Day Tract (No. 68) on Theology an Inductive and a Progressive Science.

invisible, escapes sense-perception; and yet, in Christ's view, the Heavenly Father in the Unseen is the greatest of all facts. Nature was in Christ's view simply the expression of a Father's mind and will. He interpreted it as such. This raises the whole question of Jesus Christ as the 'Interpreter of Nature.' Now when we look into the Christ's Gospels, we find that His teaching was constantly to Nature illustrated by reference to natural phenomena. We find Him referring to the sun and the rain (Matt. v. 45); to the lightning, as it flashes from east to west (Luke x. 18; Matt. xxiv. 27); to the clouds and the winds (Luke xii. 54-56); to the growing corn and the good or defective ground (John xii. 24; Matt. xiii. 3-9); to seed and thorns (Mark iv. 26-28); to figs, and lilies, and mustard trees, under whose branches the birds were accustomed to sing (Matt. xxiv. 32; vi. 28; xiii. 32); to cunning serpents and harmless doves (Matt. x. 16); to foxes with homes in holes, and birds with their cosy nests (Luke ix. 58); to ravens, and sparrows, and hens (Luke xii. 24; Matt. x. 29; Luke xiii. 34); to sheep, and goats, and swine (Matt. xxv. 32; vii. 6); to wild dogs, and wolves, and eagles (Luke xvi. 21; John x. 12; Luke xvii. 37); to vines and grapes (John xv. I-8); to wine, and salt, and leaven (Mark ii. 22; ix. 50; Luke xiii. 21).1

¹ Cf. Wendt's Die Lehre Jesu, Zweiter Theil, s. 114.

Not only so, but His interpretation of Nature was one of the fresh features of His ministry. When He began to speak in parables, He did not give loose reins to fancy, as many a pictorial preacher has done, gathering illustrations in the most arbitrary way from the kingdom of Nature: but, taking His stand upon realities, He exhibits the parallelism which exists between the world of Nature and the world of thought and of grace. 'The analogy between the human and the Divine.' it has been well said, 'is not an imaginary or artificial one, but exists in the nature of things.' 1 So that we have the very best reason for accepting Jesus Christ as an Interpreter of Nature. He, as the God-man, had an unprecedented insight into its meaning. When, then, He asks us to believe that a perfect Heavenly Father is behind and in Nature, and is speaking to us through it, ought we not to accept the fact, and profit by it?

Jes is as Interpreter of Nature.

Of course, it is quite possible to take another view. Instead of the theistic view of Nature, men may adopt an antitheistic view, or an agnostic. They may, as they witness the sun shining on the evil as well as on the good, and the rain descending on the unjust as well as on the just, conclude that Nature is indifferent to moral distinctions.² But

¹ Cf. Maurice's Sermon on 'Christ's Parables' in his book, What is Revelation? p. 100; see also R H. Hutton's Essays, vol. i., p. 137.

² Cf. Prof. Tyndall's Fragments of Science, vol. ii., p. 6.

this is not one atom more scientific than the view of Christ, which led Him to recognise in the sunshine and the shower the goodness of the Heavenly Father towards the unthankful and the evil (Matt. v. 45). Indeed, the philosopher just Christ's view not referred to has admitted that there is nothing in science to militate against Christ's view. no departure from scientific method to place behind natural phenomena a Universal Father, who, in answer to the prayers of His children, alters the currents of those phenomena.' 1 What we maintain, then, is that Jesus Christ is a true interpreter of Nature when He asks us to recognise a Heavenly Father behind and in all, and that love, as well as thought, lies behind the sunshine and the rain.

unscientific.

'Earth is,' says a writer on this very subject, 'to most men, a scene of only practical and everyday matters; dull, prosaic, wearisome. Indeed, we are all compelled partially to adopt the confession of the poet:-

> "Daily, with souls that cringe and plot, We Sinais climb, and know it not."

But to the reality of these Sinais, and of the manifestations of God there made, not only poetry and religion, but science and philosophy, bear witness. . . . Nor is there any other solid basis that I can find for either philosophy, science, or religion, than this one-of considering the whole creation as a primal revelation from God. I cannot conceive a true science adopting any other view of the organisation of matter than that of considering it dependent on God's will for all its forces, and regarding the laws of those forces as

Creation a revelation of God.

¹ Prof. Tyndall, ut supra, p. 43.

His thoughts. I cannot conceive a sound philosophy as resting on any other basis than that of looking upon spirit as the primal reality; and upon matter as merely a medium, created by the Eternal Spirit to manifest His own thoughts, and to enable us to manifest ours. Nor can I rest in a religion which separates God from His works, or makes Him other than One Being, of Whom, through Whom, and for Whom, are all things; to Whom be glory for ever.'

But Christ Jesus followed out this fact of a perfect Heavenly Father behind Nature, by inculcating the assurance that the Father observes. and is affected by, the situation of all His creatures. Thus, the Father clothes the lilies in their purple; He feeds the fowls; not a sparrow falls without the notice of the Heavenly Father; He counts the very hairs of our heads; in a word, according to the view of Christ, nothing escapes the notice of the Heavenly Father (Matt. vi. 30, 26; x. 29, 30). We may fast in secret, and give alms so that our left hand shall not know what our right hand doeth, and pray in our closets, under the assurance that the Heavenly Father takes notice of and appreciates all (Matt. vi. 1-6; 16-18). The Father in heaven, therefore, whom Jesus pointed out, is One who is sensitive in the very highest degree to the condition of all His creatures; His heart is not hard, but 'is pitiful and of tender mercy' (Jas. v. 11), so that all who desire to do so may pillow their weary heads upon

The Heavenly Father's sympathy most minute.

¹ Cf. Hill's Jesus the Interpreter of Nature, pp. 138, 139 also Naville's Le Pére Céleste, especially the last discourse

His broad breast. As a Father, He can take all His little ones into His bosom, and find room for every tried spirit in the pavilion of His love.

Now such a view of the Divine Fatherhood as Jesus thus suggests is far nobler and grander than any idea about Divine indifference. God is not far from us in haughty splendour, like some heartless and barbaric king; but He is near to us all, providing for sparrows, responding to the young raven's cry, arranging for the nursing of little children, counting hairs as well as heads, overlooking nothing, foreseeing and providing for everything, the most gracious Paternal Providence we can conceive of (Matt. x. 29; Luke xii. 24; Matt. x. 30; Psa. lxviii. 5, 6). Nothing higher or nobler as a conception of God has ever entered into the mind of man.1

2. The second fact pointed out by Jesus is the 2. Prayer existence of Prayer in Nature. His eye perceived existing Nature. efficacious prayer in the very order of Nature. Prayer may be defined as the expression of a sense of want, whether on one's own behalf or on behalf of others, in hope of that want being supplied. Jesus pointed this out in Nature. He noticed how children cry for bread, for an egg, or for a fish, as the case may be, and how the parents hear and answer their cry, and all in the order of

¹ Cf. Beyschlag's Neutestamentliche Theologie, band i., s. 77.

Nature. He noticed how a friend sometimes comes at midnight to intercede for bread for a benighted and hungry guest, and how importunity at last prevails and the intercession is answered (Matt. vii. 7–12; Luke xi. 1–13). That is to say, Nature has been made on a prayer-plan; room is found, notwithstanding 'the reign of law,' for the expression of want and desire, and for its answer, in the order of Nature.

Now, it is perfectly conceivable that Nature might have been constructed on the prayerless principle. That is to say, instead of living creatures expressing by cries or articulate requests their sense of want, and having these inarticulate or articulate petitions answered in the order of Nature, they might have been so made as to take by force what they would not accept as favour; in a word, Nature might have been constituted on the Rob Roy principle, which Wordsworth has so daintily expressed in the well-known lines:—

'The good old rule Sufficeth them, the simple plan, That they should take who have the power, And they should keep who can.'

But, after every allowance has been made for 'the struggle for existence' which is found in Nature, there is still room for prayer and its answer. The fact is that the universe is full of prayer which is efficacious. The very beasts, as

they 'roar after their prey' (see Psa. civ. 21), are giving utterance to a sense of hunger, and God allows them within the natural order the food which suits their condition. Doubtless the answer even in such a case may not be invariable; He may leave some of the beasts to starve; for other purposes may claim the sacrifice. But, as a general rule, He responds in Nature to the cries of the brute creation. So plain is this that Sir William Dawson hesitates not to say,

'A naturalist should be the last man in the world to object to the efficacy of prayer, since prayer is itself one of the most potent of natural forces. The cry of the young raven brings its food from afar, without any exertion on its part; for that cry has power to move the emotions and the muscles of the parent-bird, and to overcome her own selfish appetite. The bleat of the lamb not only brings its dam to its side, but causes the secretion of milk in her udder.'

But, as our Lord observed, it is chiefly in man's social relations that we find efficacious prayer illustrated. What prayers, for example, we have presented in the family circle! The parents are The family looked up to by their little ones as embodiments field for of Providence; there is nothing in the way of good things which they are not supposed to be able to provide. Accordingly the children cry unto them for food and raiment, for knowledge and counsel, for deliverance from danger, for consolation in distress. Indeed, the family circle is a kingdom given over to prayer. The children cry for succour of all kinds, and the parents are

a notable praver.

glad to be able to answer them. Of course, the answer is not always what is expected, nor does it come the moment the demand is made. But the parents, as Jesus Christ suggested, know how and when to give good things to their clamorous children. Efficacious prayer is seen in full force in every family.

And when we pass from the family circle to society at large, we see petitions presented by men in need to fellow-men who have the power to help them; and the answer comes with more or less grace, and all in the order of Nature. What are the courtesies of life but forms of efficacious prayer, favours asked and favours granted, the sweetness of social intercourse being thereby secured? 1 Not only so, but it will be found that the sublimest movements in human history have been the appeals made to human emotion, and the answers these appeals have evoked. Take, for example, the Philippics of Demosthenes. Do we not see in them the most eloquent appeal ever perhaps addressed to a nation's patriotism? and was not the awakening of the people of Greece the magnificent answer? Or take again the appeals made by Wilberforce and Brougham for the extirpation of the slave trade, and were they not prayers addressed to the pity of a great nation,

¹ Professor Wallace's lecture, *Prayer in Relation to Natural Law*, sect. ii., 'Prayer a Law of Nature.'

and happily not addressed in vain? The truth is that society abounds in illustrations of prayer addressed from man to man, and answered.1

3. A third fact which Jesus had before Him 3. Prayer is that Prayer is an instinct belonging to man as of hum man. Behind the veil of Nature Christ Jesus places a Heavenly Father; on this side of it He saw men with instincts which, when properly interpreted, were outcries for a Father. Men did not reach Philip's clearness of vision all at once, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us' (John xiv. 8). In multitudes of cases they were prodigals in the far-off country, and only driven by direct distress to think of coming penitently home (Luke xv. 17). In multitudes of cases they began afar off, like the publican, beating on their breasts and crying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' and hardly ventured to look up as children to a Father (Luke xviii. 13). But the prayer-instinct was within all, and the Spirit of adoption could develop it into the 'Abba, Father' (Rom. viii. 15). Christ Jesus accordingly tried to lead His followers up into filial confidence, as the end aimed at by the Father in heaven. He composed for God's human children the most comprehensive of all prayers, to which we shall refer again further

an instinct

¹ For fuller illustration of this fact see the author's book already quoted, and Prof. Wallace's lecture.

on (see p. 37), and taught them, as the Eternal Son alone could do, how best to approach the Eternal Father. 'The Lord's Prayer' is the attitude to be assumed by the children of men, once they learn the lesson of the Fatherhood of God, and are at home with Him.

That prayer is an instinct will hardly be questioned. It was illustrated by Voltaire when overtaken by a thunderstorm in the Alps. Off his guard, and impelled by a sense of danger, he cried out to God to save him; but, as the storm and the terror subsided, he soon recovered himself, and betook himself again to the ribaldry which was more agreeable to his debased taste.1 The truth is that men, when off their guard, naturally cry out for help amid the stress and difficulty of life. Trial seems intended to elicit this instinctive appeal to God above, and to drive us to the throne of grace. We may, of course, resist the discipline, declare that over us is an empty heaven, and remain at a distance from that perfect Father who would bring us to His breast. None the less should we recognise the prayer-impulse within, and give it play, and be 'orphans' no longer (John xiv. 18, margin).

Here, then, are Christ's facts, a perfect Heavenly Father speaking through Nature to His human children; Nature embodying illustrations of

¹ Cf. Newman Smyth's The Religious Feeling, American ed., p. 75

prayer and answer in its very constitution; and human nature with the prayer instinct struggling for expression, beginning in terror and distress, and culminating in 'Abba, Father,' and the 'Lord's Prayer.' We can hardly wonder if, by such foundation facts, Jesus should teach the doctrine of efficacious prayer.

II. THE DOCTRINE BASED BY CHRIST UPON THESE FACTS.

WE stated at the outset that Christianity, following the direction of Christ, begins with facts, and then suggests hypotheses to explain the facts. It will be important at this stage to look at the rival hypotheses which are proposed to account for the facts already stated. When we have glanced at these, we shall be the better able to appreciate the philosophy of Christ.

And first, we have the suggestion that prayer Is prayer a is a mistake. Although we may experience an impulse towards it, especially when we are in difficulty, it is presumption to suppose that the Power behind Nature is going to interpose for us! The keenest expression of this theory is given us by Pope in his Essay on Man: -

'Think we, like some weak prince, th' Eternal Cause Prone for his favourites to reverse his laws? Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires, Forget to thunder, and recall her fires?

On air or sea new motions be impressed, O blameless Bethel, to relieve thy breast? When the loose mountain trembles from on high, Shall gravitation cease, if thou go by?'

Now, our answer to this theory is two-fold. In the first place, it manifestly assumes that to answer prayer God must work a miracle, and secondly, that a miracle, if ever wrought, is a violation of the laws of Nature. Now, we deny both these assumptions. It will be our effort later on to show that God can answer prayer without resorting to the miraculous. This, we believe, was the view of Christ. And in regard to the view which Hume and Pope's contemporaries entertained, that a miracle, if it ever occurred, must be a violation of the laws of Nature, the whole definition is a mistake. We have discussed this question with some fulness elsewhere.1 It will be sufficient here to observe that Miracle. supposing it to have happened, was professedly to manifest the presence and action of God. It is a 'sign' held out to indicate that God is present, and accomplishing something impossible without Him. And what God proposes in Miracle is a 'restoration of the true order of Nature.' This order has, as we believe, been violated by Sin, and God restores it by Miracle.

¹ Cf. The Gospel of a Risen Saviour, chap. viii., 'The Resurrection of Christ not to be doubted because it is a Miracle.'

'The common order of Nature,' it has been very properly said, 'is not the true order of Nature. In our common experience of Nature we do not see it in its true character. . . . Where man has come into contact with Nature, and human sin has spread its blight, a false order of Nature has entered. Now, it is just here that the miracle has its sphere. Elsewhere God continues to work through His ordinary providence by means of second causes. But here His power is put forth directly to correct what has become disarranged.' 1

But it would be a strange proof of God's Miracle no presence to suppose He violated the laws of the laws of Nature which He has Himself set up. That He could not do. Is personality demonstrated only by caprice? Are lawlessness and vandalism to be accepted as the only conceivable proofs of active personal power? No, God cannot act by caprice.

'God's design,' it has been well said, 'when He intervenes in the history of the world and in the life of individuals, is not to make parade of His Omnipotence, but to re-establish the order interfered with by the culpable enterprises of human liberty. The gospel speaks of a redemption as being the end of all the miracles which it recounts, a redemption, that is to say, the destruction of the chains which man has put upon himself, and the accomplishment of the destiny which God from the first had assigned to him. He wishes then, in fact, to bring back Nature to her true development, and to conduct her to her true perfection. Would you expect Him to commence this work of order by disorder? . . . God has been guilty of no coup d'etat; He does not violate the constitution which He has Himself given to the world.' 2

¹ Cf. Stearn's Present Day Theology, p. 63.

² Cf. Prof. Bois on 'Le Miracle et les Lois de la Nature' in La Vérité Chrétienne et le Doute Moderne, pp. 270, 271.

Consequently, even if a miracle happened now in answer to prayer, as we believe miracles did happen in the days of Christ, there would be in it no violation of the laws of Nature. But, as already indicated, we do not need to suppose a miracle in answer to prayer now-adays. God can, we shall see, answer prayer by using the laws He has set up.

Mr. Bacon's illustration.

A writer has admirably answered this first theory in the following fashion: Quoting from Pope as above, he pictures an Alpine peasant thanking God after some landslip for the preservation of his home:—

When the loose mountain trembles from on high, and house, and home, and children, and wife, all, with his own life, are in jeopardy from the horrors of the impending landslide, he groans, he shouts, he cries, he prays to God for deliverance. And when, by and by, the awful storm and crash of the ruining masses have ceased, and he ventures to look forth on the scene of desolation, and realizes that his cottage is still safe, and his children sleeping unharmed and undisturbed in their beds, in the simplicity of a trusting soul he lifts up his thanks to God who has heard his prayer in peril, and delivered him with so great a deliverance. It is all very well for the scientific gentleman from London to come up to his side, and with a fine superiority explain to him that there has really been no intervention, no interruption of the laws of Naturethat the causes which determined the path of the landslide are not of recent origin—the jutting crag that caught and swerved it aside, the stretch of loose sand through which it ploughed heavily with retarded motion, the swell of land that checked it at last, just as it seemed on the point of overwhelming the good man's dwelling-that all these conditions had been fixed from of old, that they were of ancient geologic formation, and that the devastating masses

had only obeyed the law of gravitation and followed the line of least resistance. But it is in vain. At such a time the spirit of an honest man ought to be not only glad but grateful, and will be. Look at them side by side, the philosopher and the peasant, and say whether of the twain is the type of a nobler manhood, of a truer instinct of duty, nay! of a sounder philosophy-the philosopher, glibly pattering of the Unknowable, and of formations and frictions and gravitations, and saying, "Oh, my dear man, there has been no deliverance, no hearing of prayer, nothing to be grateful for, nothing but laws of Nature; don't pray, there's a good fellow; don't give thanks; don't be grateful, it is only your good luck, you know,"-or the peasant, kneeling there upon the threshold of his uninjured home, lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven in thankfulness to say, "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his troubles." '1

It should only increase our sense of gratitude to think that God made provision for the answer to our prayer at the beginning of the world, and that all Nature's forces were waiting to give the answer at the appointed second.

The second insufficient theory is that God's Has prayer any other use than will is constant, and that prayer simply brings the human will into harmony with the divine, On this view the prayer instinct is not to be stifled. Men are to pray if they feel inclined; but the prayer never influences God, it only brings our wayward wills into submission and harmony. On this theory prayer is allowed a subjective influence. It helps our hearts, but it has no external effect.

bringing man's will into union with God's.

¹ Cf. Prayer and Miracle in relation to Natural Law, by the Rev. Leonard Woolsey Bacon.

Prayer would soon cease if it secured only submission. God's will works on as if we had never prayed. 'All prayer,' said Rev. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton. 'is to change the will human into submission to the will divine.' But if this is the whole rationale of prayer, if it is merely to modify ourselves, nothing will save its extinction. And indeed such an acute thinker as Robertson saw this, for in the same sermon he says that we are to pray, as Christ did, 'till prayer makes you cease to pray;' and he thinks the disciples were to reach this state of prayerless submission when the prophecy of the Master would be fulfilled, 'In that day ve shall ask Me nothing.' The truth is, however, that prayer, if it has only this reflex influence, will cease from among men because it shall then be seen to be 'an immoral sham.' It is a hollow mockery, if we are to pray as if God is to hear and answer us, all the while believing that it can only modify ourselves. Besides, as M. Bersier showed, in his answer to Robertson, intercession in such circumstances would be impossible. Why should we pray for others, why should we pray for ourselves, if all that can result from the exercise is our own submission to unchangeable fate?2 The instinct of prayer must be delusive and selfish altogether, if its sole outcome be submission.

¹ Cf. Sermons, Fourth Series, No. III. The same view will be found in Blair's Sermons, and in Lord Kames' Sketches.

² Cf. Bersier's Sermons, tome iv. p. 104.

We are consequently driven to reject the theory that this is its sole object: we believe that one of the great elements of prayer is to bring us into harmony with God's will; but to state that as the only object of prayer makes our prayer-instinct a false one. It must lead, if accepted, to the extinction of all prayer.

Besides, we shall see that it is quite unnecessary and quite unworthy, to imagine God to be uninfluenced by the prayers of men. In Christ's view prayer certainly has an objective influence. It is no mere exercise to lead us to submission, but an earnest outcry to One who is mighty to save.

A third theory, which we must reject as in- Can prayer sufficient, is that prayer may be efficacious when temporal offered for spiritual blessings, but cannot be efficacious for material and temporal blessings.

be offered for blessings?

From this we would imagine that the mind and spirit of man are not amenable to laws, as his body is: that God could lay His finger somehow on the spirit, but dare not touch the body. But is not the whole tendency of science to show that mind as well as matter is involved in the reign of law? that if things are fixed irrevocably in the one sphere, they must be fixed as irrevocably in the Efficacy of other? This is the introduction of a dualism which the facts will not warrant. What authority has any man for insinuating that the petition, to temporal. 'give us our daily bread,' must prove abortive,

cannot be limited to spiritual blessings and denied while 'forgive us our debts' and 'deliver us from evil' may be answered?

It will be found also that this habit of limiting prayer to spiritual things is the reappearance of the old distinction between the secular and the sacred, the holy and the profane.

'It is the same pernicious view which has taken religion out of week-days and confined it to Sundays—out of the shop and street, and shut it in the church—out of the world of acting, loving, suffering man, and placed it in the small conventicle, the narrow sect.' 1

Now, Christ never countenanced such a view. With Him prayer was as valid when offered for things temporal as for things spiritual; and nothing is gained by giving away half the contention, in hope of retaining the other half. It must be all or none!

Is the answer to prayer a miracle?

A fourth theory which requires to be stated and repudiated is that in answering prayer God needs to work a miracle. This is the position taken up by some of the defenders of the efficacy of prayer. They maintain that 'the sequence of cause and effect in the physical system is not constant, but is habitually interrupted by Divine interference.' They would defend the efficacy of prayer on the same lines on which they would defend miracle. For example, the late Provost Jellett, in his work on The Efficacy of Prayer,

¹ Cf. Clarke's Christian Doctrine of Prayer, p. 115.

distinctly takes up the ground that, in asking for an answer to prayer, we ask for a miracle. Thus, he says:

It is a fallacy to suppose that every answer to prayer requires a miracle

'It is no violation of the principle of law, to suppose that the introduction of a Divine volition into one of two identical systems of antecedents should determine a wholly different consequent; and it is this, and nothing clse, which is asserted by the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer. It is not asserted that, as a result of prayer, a different consequent follows from the same system of antecedents; but it is asserted that, as a result of prayer, a new antecedent appears, and that thus the consequent is changed. If it be true, as I think it is, that prayer asks for a miracle, this form of the argument derives support from a very common definition of a miracle, namely, that it is a violation . . . of some law of Nature.' 1

Now, such a view might be entertained by those who see nothing in Nature but the operation of God. If His immanence makes Him the sole worker, then indeed might we regard every answer to prayer as a miracle. But we do not require to take up any such position. Jesus did not, as we shall see, take it up. He recognised the objective existence of the powers in Nature, and of the human will as controlling these. Much more may they be controlled and utilized by God. It was on this line, as we shall presently see, that He defended the propriety and efficacy of prayer.

And indeed the whole defence of the 'efficacy of prayer' resolves itself, in the last resort, into

¹ Page 54.

the fact of the 'freedom of the human will.' If

our consciousness deceives us, and we can by our will-power initiate nothing; if we are mere puppets in the hands of an unknown Power; if we can lay no modifying hand on Nature, but are under a delusion in fancying we do; then we may relegate prayer also to the limbo of delusions too. But if, as sound thinking assures us, the human will is free, and can modify the sequences in Nature so as to secure progress and civilisation, we must surely allow the same power of modification to Him who admittedly knows all about the laws of Nature which He has set up. Without creating any new force, by simply manipulating the laws at present in existence, God may surely secure answers to prayer in these latter days without any resort to miracle. As a recent writer has well put it:-

The freedom of the will the key of the whole position.

'In the will-power of man we find a principle by which natural order is overruled. Now, if this principle is possessed by man, why in the world may we not assume that it is also possessed by God? Of course I admit to the full the regularity of the operations of Nature, which we call "law;" but we know that law is not the slightest impediment to the exercise of the will human; then why should it be to will divine?"

Having thus disposed of the rival theories, we are prepared to consider the doctrine or philosophy of Prayer as laid down by Christ. It may be

¹ Cf. Dialogues on the Efficacy of Prayer, by Powis Hoult, p. 78.

stated as follows: A PERFECT HEAVENLY FATHER Christ's WILL GLADLY HEAR AND ANSWER THE PETITIONS prayer. AND INTERCESSIONS OF THE CHILDREN OF MEN; BUT IT WILL BE IN SUCH A WAY, AND AT SUCH A TIME, AS HE DEEMS BEST.

doctrine of

This doctrine will be found to cover the facts better than any of its rivals; and when we have fairly analysed it, we shall see that it meets fairly every difficulty which, as far as we know, has been suggested against the exercise of prayer. And here we would remark:-

1. An omniscient Heavenly Father may be expected to anticipate the needs of His children.

When we examine Christ's deliverances on this subject of prayer, we find this thought prominent. In warning His disciples against vain repetition in prayer, a point which we must emphasize later on, He urges, 'for your Father knoweth what things ve have need of, before ve ask Him' (Matt. vi. 8); and again, in deprecating unholy anxiety about temporal things, He urges, 'for your Father Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of afterall these things' (ver. 32). It is plain, therefore, that Jesus regarded suppliants as dealing with a Father Who anticipated all their needs, Who was beforehand with them always, and Who needs no afterthought!

Now this is exactly what we mean

Heavenly needs no thoughts but anticipates all wants.

Providence. It is a perfect foresight, with corresponding provision. It includes all possible contingencies, and makes provision for them. And accordingly we find one of the prophets applying the principle of Providence to prayer, and assuring his readers in God's name, 'And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear' (Isa. lxv. 24). That is to say, the Heavenly Father, because omniscient, may be expected to anticipate the needs and prayers of men; long before their prayer is uttered, or even conceived, He has made provision for its answer.

Earthly fathers, as Christ Jesus pointed out, can make provision for their children; and the more observant and thoughtful an earthly parent becomes, the more thoroughly he can anticipate his children's needs, and provide for them. If earthly parents know how to give good things to their little ones, with their limited knowledge of the laws of Nature, how much more may the Heavenly Father be expected to anticipate the needs of all His creatures, and to provide for them out of His perfect knowledge!

It may be worth while here to notice the dream which the Positivists, headed by Comte, entertain of reaching such a knowledge of the antecedents through the progress of Science as to be able with accuracy to calculate the consequents; in a word,

to be able to prophesy. The more the matter is scientific examined, the less likely we are to be furnished with either the prophets or their predictions. But the speculation helps us to appreciate the position of the Heavenly Father and His anticipations. He sees the end from the beginning. He understands all about the antecedents and the consequents. Nothing can take Him by surprise. His arrangements, therefore, include all contingencies, and provides for them. After a very lively and ininteresting discussion of Scientific prevision, the late Professor Henry Rogers sums up his discussion in these terms:

prevision with God.

'To utter true prophecy must require, for a world like this, infinite wisdom no less than knowledge; and we need not wonder at any of the obscurities which precede its fulfilment, if it but be made plain when it is fulfilled. For He alone who perfectly knows the conditions under which such intimations can be given, without disturbing that course of events in which foreknown and predetermined issues are to be wrought out by voluntary agents and moral means, can paint the future in that chiaroscuro which shall allow man neither to anticipate nor frustrate any part of it; which shall leave him the ignorant instrument of working out the designs of a higher will, while he yet follows his own; so to act, that the Supreme Ruler has His end, and we have ours.' 1

Now, it is this Omniscient Father with Whom we have to deal in prayer. He can anticipate all our need. He can provide for it all. This was the view Christ encouraged His contemporaries to entertain.

¹ Cf. Reason and Faith, and other Essays, p. 315.

2. The Omniscient Father will not rule Himself out of either work or fellowship.

We advance now to another thought given us by Christ Jesus. The view entertained by the Deists of last century was that God had so started the machine of the Universe as to have nothing now to do but watch it going. They thought He had ruled Himself out of all work; He was quietly spending His Sabbath since creation in absolute inactivity. And this view still lingers among men. Indeed, the ideas entertained in connection with the 'reign of law' are deistic and semi-deistic: men assume that God has arranged Himself out of the system, which could go now, they believe, without Him. This was not Christ's view. He entertained the assurance that in the Father's Sabbath of the Ages, there were works of necessity and of mercy which He had reserved, and which He performed. Was not this exactly the argument when Jesus replied to the charges of Sabbathdesecration made against Him, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work '? (John v. 17.) So that the whole doctrine of the Divine immanence, which eighteenth century deism lost sight of, but which is now being revived, was really a commonplace with Jesus.

God still immanent, as well as transcendent.

> 'An inactive Deity,' says Abraham Tucker, 'doing nothing for many ages past besides contemplating the play of his works, seems repugnant to our idea of perfection, as that includes omnipotence and an absolute command over creatures:

which we cannot well apprehend without an actual operation An inactive upon them to govern and direct their motions; for power Deity would not be never exerted, does, to our thinking, scarce deserve the name perfect. of power. And though we cannot suppose otherwise than that God is completely happy in Himself, nor wants amusements to pass His time agreeably, as we do; yet neither is it incongruous with our notions of Him to Whom nothing is labour or trouble, that He should not have despatched His work once for all, to solace Himself ever after in quiet and repose, but should have reserved Himself something still to do, wherein He might find continual employment for His Almighty Power. Nor does this supposition derogate from His infinite wisdom, because it does not represent Him as making the world imperfect out of necessity, for want of skill or ability to frame one which should run on for ever without correcting, but by choice, because He so enlarged His plan as to take in, not only the motions of matter, and actions of sentiment and intelligent creatures, but also His own immediate acts; which we may say were contained among the list of second causes, second not to any prior agent which might give them force or direction, but to the first determination of His will, and to the plan or order of succession He laid down from everlasting.'1

But Jesus made it plain also that the perfect Heavenly Father will not restrain Himself from fellowship, any more than from work. The very title 'Father' implies a delight in fellowship, and provision for it. Hence Jesus reminded His contemporaries of the Father's desire to meet them in the secrecy of the closet as well as in the publicity of the Synagogue or Temple. He is so perfect a Father as to welcome even little ones to His fellowship; and He sent His Son expressly to end

¹ Light of Nature Pursued, part ii., chap. xxv, 'On Providence' § 10.

our orphan condition and make us feel at home with Him (John xiv. 18, margin).

And in this connection it may be well to notice that the downward affections are stronger than the upward. A father has far stronger love for his son than the son has for the father. A son's death is a far deeper sorrow than a father's death. The Apostle Paul seems to have had this idea in view when he spoke to the Corinthians of his parental interest in them, yet had to add, 'though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved' (2 Cor. xii. 14, 15). We are warranted, then, by analogy, in believing that if our hearts cry out instinctively for the Heavenly Father, still more strongly does the Heavenly Father yearn for our fellowship. And nothing is more striking in the parable of the Prodigal Son than Christ's representation of the aged father beholding the returning prodigal a great way off, and running to meet him and to welcome him home (Luke xv. 20). The whole teaching of the Lord Jesus proceeds on the idea that God the Father is anxious for our fellowship, far more in earnest to afford us fellowship than we are to accept it, not only because He calls Himself Father, but because, as such, He is tull of love and tender compassion towards us.

God s desire for fellowship with men

3. Prayer has been and can be included in the Father's fore-ordination of all things.

Now if, as we have seen, it is reasonable to believe in the Omniscient Father fore-ordaining the supply of all His children's needs, there will be a temptation to say that prayer is superfluous; we are sure to get what we need whether we pray or no. This has been admirably put by a writer on the subject:-

'I know, indeed, well,' say Heinrich Zschokke, 'that to-day there are many to whom prayer seems to be something superfluous; who cannot pray, because they would not pass for hypocrites; who regard prayer as a very good occupation for people of limited understandings, or a kind of official duty for the clergy. Why pray? they say. My prayer most certainly cannot change the course of events in the very least. What the Divine wisdom has ordained follows, and I could not alter it by any supplication. What is needful and necessary for me God supplies without any demand of mine; He knows it beforehand, before, therefore, I can ask Him for it. My counsel, my idea has no influence over the everlasting counsel of Providence. The infinite goodness of God guarantees my good also, although I do not ask Him anything about it.'1

There is consequently the temptation to take what the Father supplies without the courtesy of asking for it; to gather what God gives without any more idea of fellowship than the fowls. Like lower animals, men are tempted to get their living through work, and to abandon the apparently superfluous prayer.

But Jesus clearly indicates that prayer has Prayer fore-ordained. been included in fore-ordination (Matt. vi. 7, 8). This is the meaning of prayer as it exists in

¹ Cf. Stunden der Andacht, No. 58.

Nature. The plan of God includes the prayer; and Jesus argues from analogy that the Heavenly Father's plan includes also our prayers to Him (Matt. vii. 7-11). It is a mistake to suppose that we shall get His good things all the same whether we pray or no. He can condition the blessing upon the exercise of prayer, so that we miss it if we do not pray.

One of the writers already quoted gives a very admirable illustration of how an earthly parent could condition a certain blessing on its being asked for, and argues a fortiori to the ability of the Heavenly Parent to do so.

Mr. Bacon's parable.

'Hear a parable,' says Mr. Bacon. 'A certain man had two sons, one of whom was wise and one was foolish. Them he placed at school, and promised them gifts at Christmas on condition of their writing the week before, to remind him of this promise. And soon after this he went into a far country, from which he would be obliged to start the gifts. to be in time for Christmas, earlier than the arrival of these letters of the week before. So he said to himself, "I know just how it will be with those two boys. The elder is faithful and punctual. It is safe for me to express the parcel to his address. And the other boy is negligent and indolent, and, what is worse, he does not really believe my word. I know he will not write; therefore I will send him a letter explaining to him how it was that he failed of receiving a gift." When the week before Christmas came, the younger boy made game of his brother for writing, saying that he had studied the time-tables, and had found that it was quite too late for a letter to make any difference; that if the package was coming, it must be on its way already; and if it was not at that moment actually aboard the train and en route, not all the letter-writing in the world would put it aboard. Christmas morning came, and only one package

was delivered at the door. Still he was confident that writing made no difference. The package must have started before the letter arrived. But when, by-and-by, instead of a gift he got his father's letter, he was observed to be much less jocular and more pensive. However, the professor of physics in the school comforted him with the latest edition of Appleton's Railroad Guide, showing him from the timetables that he had not been in the least to blame.'

Now, it will be seen from this illustration to be quite possible for an omniscient Father to condition His gifts upon the exercise of prayer. He has such absolute fore-knowledge as to be able to time His answers to a second, so as to arrive in response to prayer. There is nothing to hinder Him from arranging every answer to prayer, from the very beginning of the world. The prayer was Prayer inspired and foreseen, nay more, the doctrine of Christ in that therefore prayer is Divinely prompted, inspired in short, and consequently it is simply a question with the all-wise Father of weaving in the fore-ordained answer with the fore-ordained and inspired prayer. The very highest conception of the government of the world would be just this—the pre-arrangement of prayer and answer from all eternity, so that as the answers came due in the great system, the inspiring Spirit would go forth to prompt the faith and prayer on which for wise purposes those answers were made to depend! Is not this Paul's idea as well as Christ's when he asserts, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we

ordained.

ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God?' (Rom. viii. 26, 27.)

4. Prayer to an Omniscient Father should be expressive of a child's confidence in His perfect provision.

This is the next element in the doctrine of Christ. Supposing that prayer is a reasonable exercise, it should be characterised by child-like confidence. In warning His hearers against vain repetition such as the heathen indulge in, Jesus is referring to the heathen and superstitious idea that repetition is meritorious. The prophets of Baal fancied it meritorious to cry, 'O Baal, hear us,' for an entire afternoon; just as some of our contemporaries make the repetition of Paternosters and Ave Marias to be meritorious. Such repetition becomes heartless formality, and deserves no response, if regarded as meritorious. What Jesus advises, therefore, is that we should not think that by long and tedious prayers we lay the Father under obligation. This was the Pharisaic idea to merit an answer by the length of the prayer. Rather ought we to remember that it is an omniscient Father we are dealing with, and, therefore,

Repetition vain, if deemed meritorious. He does not need details of all our wants, though He loves that we should explain them. We may safely leave our case in His all-wise hands, assured that He can and 'will supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus' (Phil. iv. 19). We ought to adopt the suggestion of the wise man, 'Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few' (Eccl. v. 2).

It was to promote brevity and comprehensiveness in prayer that Jesus composed for His disciples the matchless Lord's Prayer. Upon this model and form—for the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke show that He intended it to be The Lord's both—we need not enlarge. But a few thoughts analysed. will serve to elucidate our Lord's doctrine of prayer. It is surely significant that personal petitions are relegated in it to the second place, while intercession for God's glory, and the coming of His kingdom, and the transformation of this earth into a heaven of happy obedience, occupies the first place and foreground. It shows that God and men are to be put before self. It shows how unselfish we shall be when we enter into the spirit of Christ. Moreover, of the personal petitions, only one concerns temporalities — that which is offered for daily bread. While these are

not to be overlooked in prayer, Jesus implies that they should not be made too much of. Indeed, the position assigned to 'daily bread' in the perfect Prayer coincides with the teaching in the succeeding context about not being over-anxious about food and drink and raiment. These, He indicates, form the staple of heathen prayers: 'after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things' (Matt. vi. 32).

Now, in no way can we show better our calm trust in the Father than in saying little about things temporal and much about things spiritual when before Him. If we in this way, by deliberate intercession, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we may be of easy mind regarding temporal provision. He will feed us more faithfully than He does the fowls. No really good thing will He withhold from him that walketh uprightly. We are consequently to show our filial confidence before the Father by comprehensive prayers, in which we take broad views of His kingdom and glory, and put self into the subordinate position it deserves.

5. Prayer ought to be patient and importunate. For Jesus clearly intimates that the perfect Father may keep His children waiting for the answer, and sometimes waiting long. God is not

going to spoil us by giving the answer always, or perhaps even often, the very moment we ask Him. He keeps us waiting at His gate and knocking, as the friend at midnight knocked (Luke xi. 5-10). He keeps us waiting for our vindication, like the widow before the hard-hearted judge (Luke xviii. 1-8). But He answers at last. In Prayer may this way He trains men to be importunate, per- be importunate. severing, patient. It is just here that character is developed. Even Jesus Himself prayed the same prayer three times over in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 44). He was importunate; He persevered in prayer, and watched in the same with thanksgiving; He was patient before the Father, like all His brethren.

It is here that we see the character of efficacious prayer. It depends on the good pleasure of God the Father. He may see it to be best for all interests to postpone the answer for days, for months, for years. He may keep us knocking long and loudly at His gate; but, as we persevere, we find that patience has its perfect work within us, and that we are on the way to become perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James i. 4).

One of the admissions of Holy Scripture, as well as of Jesus Christ, is the disappointment of God's people, and the long delay which oftentimes precedes the answer. For example, how long had Abraham to wait before the son of promise appeared! So long, in fact, that Sarah and Abraham thought in their despair that they had better hasten the blessing by marrying Hagar to the patriarch; but the blessing tarried notwithstanding, and came only in God's time (Gen. xvi., xxi.). How long, again, was David kept waiting before he got the promised kingdom! Years upon years of outlawry and exile, then long years at Hebron over half the kingdom, before the blessing in its fulness came (2 Sam. v. 4, 5).

Not only so, but the Father may in His wisdom give His suppliants not literally what they ask, but something better. For example, the apostle Paul prayed for deliverance from the thorn in the flesh; but the thorn remained, and all-sufficient grace came instead. The result was that he began to glory in his infirmities, finding that the Divine power was resting upon him (2 Cor. xii. 7-9).

Let us suppose for a moment that the Father's plan was different; that He never disappointed His people nor delayed His answer to our prayers. Then we should inevitably become impatient and spoiled children. If we consider what our children become when they get *instanter* all they ask for, we shall endorse God's wiser method. The gratified children become most disagreeable little tyrants. Their calls change from petitions into

Instant answers, would spoil us.

commands. They usurp authority instead of submitting to it, and give their superiors not one moment's peace. Now, the Lord Jesus shows in His statements about prayer that the perfect Father is not going to have spoiled children in His house. He does not engage to give us all we ask; nor when we want it. He may see it to be better for us and for others to disappoint us, to keep us waiting, and waiting long before He grants the answer. But the disappointment will turn out to be even better than our immediate gratification could have been; and the patient perseverance through the long waiting-time will prove a better blessing than the more definite answer. And so Jesus taught men that they ought to pray; for prayer to a perfect Heavenly Father is reasonable. They ought to pray always, and not to be discouraged; for sooner or later the Father will grant the answer desired.

There is one element in prayer which remains to be noticed, and which Jesus in His doctrine did not overlook-that of thanksgiving, rising as it does into joy and praise. He told His disciples that their sorrow at His departure by death would be changed into joy by His coming again to them in resurrection power, and this joy would never be taken from them. In that day they would not be Thankspraying to Him, but to the Father in His name, praise as the and such prayers would indeed be answered, prayer.

giving and

Through these effectual prayers in His name their joy would reach its fulness (John xvi. 23-25). Joyful suppliants instinctively proceed to thanksgiving and praise. 'The merry' begin to 'sing psalms' (James v. 13). The apostle Paul understood the privilege when he exhorted the Philippians to—'In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus' (Phil. iv. 6, 7, R.V.). We thus see prayer in its climax. It is entering into such a peaceful and thankful state of confidence with God, as to feel that He is our 'Confidant,' and takes such an interest in all our concerns as to enable and warrant us to live without carefulness. This, as we shall see, was the secret of Christ's own peaceful life, notwithstanding the burdens He was voluntarily bearing. The human and the Divine hearts are meant to be in unison, and fellowship to culminate in songs of praise!

We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong

^{&#}x27;Lord, what a change within us one short hour of prayer Spent in Thy presence doth prevail to make; What heavy burdens from our bosoms take; What parched ground refresh, as with a shower! We kneel, and all around us seems to lower; We rise, and all the distant and the near Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear.

Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled when with us in prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee!'

Trench

Here, then, we have Christ's doctrine of prayer. It is that we are in the hands of a perfect Heavenly Father who can so fore-ordain all things as to arrange for prayer and its answer; we ought, in consequence, in a lowly child-like spirit to give the prayer-impulse within free play, asking chiefly for God's glory and the advancement of His kingdom, but also for daily bread and daily pardon and deliverance from evil. If the answer to our prayers is delayed, Christ advises us to persevere, and enjoy the blessing when in God's good time and way it comes. Surely such a view of the facts is reasonable, and should satisfy every inquiring mind.

III. THE EXPERIENCE THROUGH WHICH THIS DOCTRINE OF PRAYER MAY BE VERIFIED.

Following the experimental method, we have now to inquire if experience can be produced in verification of the doctrine of efficacious prayer, and if any experiment can be undertaken which will test it fairly. We believe that honest inquirers can find out the verification, if they will only go about it in the right way. Let us look

first at the experience, and then at the possibility of experiment.

The prayerful Christ.

1. Prayer has a history. We can point to a long line of prayerful people about whose influence there can be no doubt, and whose assurance was that God the Father had answered their prayers. First and chiefest comes Jesus Christ. We have been considering His doctrine or philosophy of prayer, and now we turn for verification to His life of prayer. The Father's fellowship was His constant support. When deserted by friends and foes, He faced the world in arms through simple faith in God the Father. 'Ye shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me' (John xvi. 32). We assert, then, that the prayerful Christ is our first Witness to the efficacy of prayer. His life could not have been the real, influential life we know it was, but for the power of prayer.

And there has been a long line of saintly heroes, 'men of God,' as they have been called, because men who lived in fellowship with Him, and these prayerful spirits have all testified that God has answered them in truth, and prayer has been efficacious. Are we to suppose that the martyred witnesses of the early ages, whose only hope, at last, was in God, and who witnessed such a good confession, were deceived in supposing

Men of God who have been prayerful.

that the Father heard and answered them? Are we to suppose that men of prayer like Luther. and Calvin, and Knox, and Ridley, and Latimer, were deceived in their conviction that God heard and helped them? They professed to find a blessing in prayer; they were honest men, and suffered for righteousness' sake; they may be taken as a proof that they had verified the efficacy of prayer in their experience. Indeed, when we take up the question of efficacious prayer as a history, we have to declare, with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the time would fail us to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthæ; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises (Heb. xi. 32, 33). No careful inquirer, as we think, can review the history of prayer, as given us in the lives of God's servants, without admitting that there is primâ facié proof of prayer being efficacious.

But now we pass from experience as given to us in the history of the saints, to the experience of the individual believer. If any intelligent Christian is asked about his experience of the efficacy of prayer, he can give an answer 'with merkness of wisdom.' He has begun, at some period in his history, to speak to God as his Father; to pour out his whole heart to Him; and he has felt it to be no mere form, but a great reality, the most momentous in his whole experience. A recent writer on *The Evidence of Christian Experience*, has said,

Verification in ordinary Christian experience.

'The spiritual effects which follow prayer are not explicable through human agency. . . . The Christian is compelled by most painful experience to distinguish sharply between the results of his own self-trust and the results of prayer. He attempts the work of spiritual reformation in his own strength, and he fails utterly. Over and over again -for it is long before the Christian learns this lesson-he is compelled to bewail his folly in building his house upon the sand of his own good resolutions and efforts. The sin which he would overcome proves too strong, the evil habit too deeply rooted for such treatment. But it is altogether different when he prays the effectual fervent prayer of faith. Then he lavs hold upon divine power, and this effects the result that his own strength tried in vain to accomplish. He cannot doubt the reality of the response that comes to his cry. The strength of Christ is made perfect in his weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9). Thus the work of sanctification goes on. Remaining sin is more and more overcome; the habit of prayer becomes more a part of the man's life, and the spiritual results of it more undeniable. But there are other answers to prayer, that are not confined to the inner life, but extend to the world without. These are numerous and striking, and possess strong evidential force. I do not refer merely to the prayers which aim at physical blessings. though they are not by any means to be excluded; but to all prayers the answers to which involve manifest providential results in the external world. To this class belone the prayers for guidance in matters of Christian duty. The answer comes not alone through inward impressions. Indeed, as regards these impressions, the sober, cautious Christian is not inclined to accept them without deliberate and scrupulous investigation. There are providential indications, as we call them, coming to us from without, upon which we lay the chief stress in our decisions. What Christian has not, over and over again, been guided by such

indications, and what Christian doubts that they are real answers to prayer?'1

We can thus point to the experience of the believer, for whom, to use Zschokke's beautiful figure, 'prayer has opened, as it were, the gates of the world of spirits, whose citizen he is, and made him to see this present world in a new light;' and we can claim it as a verification of Christ's doctrine of prayer.

2. But what about experiment? Cannot some experiment be made which will fairly test the doctrine of efficacious prayer? In this experi- Proposed hospital mental age, it is upon some experiment or experiments that investigators will depend for the testing of a theory. Can no experiment be devised which will be applicable to prayer? It is at this stage that we have briefly to notice the hospital test proposed some years ago in the Contemporary Review. This was to single out a certain ward in an hospital, and, for a period of from three to five years, have it specially prayed for by all the faithful throughout the world; and then to see what additional results could be tabulated as compared with the previous lessprayerful years. In this way, it was suggested, the action of the supernatural in Nature could be quantitatively determined.

¹ Cf. Stearn's Ely Lectures, ut supra, pp. 185-187.

Now, the first remark to be made about the suggested experiment is that no true Christian could possibly bring himself to undertake such an experiment, as he would be offering his prayers for the sake of the test, and not for the answer. Such prayers could not be truly offered in faith, nor in complete subjection to God's will.

Besides, such a test violates one of the first principles of Christ's doctrine of prayer, which is that we are not heard for our much speaking. A single sincere prayer may so cover the entire field in question as to set all such experiments and averages at defiance. A single suppliant may so commit the sickness of humanity to the Infinite Father as to render completely abortive such a demonstration as was proposed. The experiment fails because its conditions are impossible. Unless those making it could insulate a ward from the sympathies of all the faithful—and this they could never do-and compare the results in this ward with that of prayed-for wards, the experiment becomes absolutely worthless; nor, if they could do this, would the test be of any use, as it might be the will of God that those in the ward should not be healed. To offer prayer properly, it must be 'not my will, but Thine, be done;' and if the patients were not healed, God would really be answering the prayer, though ordinary observers would sav He had not done so.

The conditions of the test are impossible.

If this prayer-guage, then, must prove abortive, is there no experiment, it may be asked, which men may try to test the efficacy of prayer? Most certainly there is, though we would not call it 'experiment,' for it must be conducted with a sincere desire to reach the truth upon the subject, and not merely as an experiment. Where must a good-hearted investigator begin? Not surely on the ward of an hospital, saying virtually to the Infinite Father, 'Unless you heal these poor people's diseases in a miraculous way, I will not believe in any answer to human prayer.' What right has any sinful soul to dictate such terms to the Hearer of prayer? We deserve no sign from heaven at all; and if we are to receive any token, we must begin with the alphabet of Christian experience, and meet the Father fairly. desire to obtain an answer to prayer must begin where it began with the publican, who beat upon the experience his breast and dared not look up to heaven, but of prayer's efficacy cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Such a must begin with broken-hearted, humiliated soul will get the answer, and go down to his house justified (Luke xviii. 13, 14). It must begin where the prodigal began, 'I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son; make me as one of Thy hired servants.' To such a penitent soul there

pardon.

will be a response, a welcome to the Father's fellowship, the best robe, the ring, the fatted calf, music and dancing (Luke xv. 18-32). But Pharisees, who are not sure there is any God who can hear prayer, or who get the length of thanking God they are better and wiser than other people, may expect to be sent empty away.

True prayer, in short, must begin with pardon. The first condition of prevailing prayer must be reconciliation with Him to Whom we pray; for how can any sinful soul expect that the offended Father will treat with him about mere temporalities when there is the spiritual question to be answered, Is he ready to give up his enmity and take God's peace? The perfect Father can only be expected to take up the secondary considerations, when the primary and all-important matter of pardon and acceptance has been settled. It is here, consequently, upon the dust of deserved humiliation, that the prayer-experiment must begin. 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones' (Isa. lvii. 15).

New experience through prayer. But now, supposing pardon and peace with God the Father to have been experienced by the inquirer into the efficacy of prayer—and this will

simply be a repetition for the many milliouth time of the experience of poor sinful souls; then the inquirer will find that 'all things have become new' through this initial experience (2 Cor. v. 17). Nature will have become new. Love-tokens in Nature will be seen to multiply, and wrath-tokens will be seen not only to be in a minority, but also to be much less than such sinful souls deserve. Mystery will not have disappeared; but it will be seen to be love's touchstone, calling upon God's children to trust the All-wise Father through all the 'terrestrial darkness' till it disappear before 'celestial day!'

And the cure of the diseases of men will be seen also in a new light by the pardoned soul. There will be no need to demand fresh miracle in the case. The All-wise Father, who has provided so bountifully for the sick inhabitants of this little planet, has arranged His cures, we may feel certain, from the beginning of the world. His infinite foresight has provided for all contingencies. There need be no accident ward in the arrangements of His providence; for He anticipates and foresees all contingencies, and turns out to the second His provision for the need. And so as the inquirer prosecutes his experiment, he the man has finds a new world around him because he has become a new man.

The fact is that 'all things,' including the

development of the world, the history of human thought, and the history of human action, become new in the experience of a pardoned soul. And prayer itself becomes new. It is found to be real fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is found to be the secret of inspiration and strength. It is found to be the secret of philanthropy. And the experiment is sure to end in the noble assurance of Tennyson:

'More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves, and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.'



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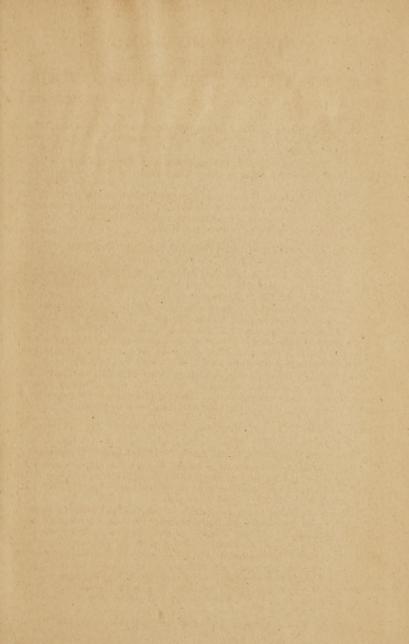
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